

Oral History Program  
California State University, Sacramento, California

Oral History Interview  
with  
**SUSUMU SATOW**

January 11, 1996  
Sacramento, California

By Kinya Noguchi  
Florin Japanese American Citizens League



# JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

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## PREFACE

In the summer of 1987, a small group of people from the Florin JACL met at Mary and Al Tsukamoto's home to plan a new project for the organization. Because of the unique history of Florin, we felt that there were special stories that needed to be preserved. The town of Florin, California was once a thriving farming community with a large Japanese American population. The World War II internment of persons of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast, devastated the town and it never recovered. Today there is no town of Florin; it has been merged into the larger county of Sacramento. Many Japanese Americans who reside throughout the United States, however, have their origins from Florin, or have relatives and friends who once had ties to this community. The town may no longer exist, but the spirit of the community continues to survive in people's hearts and memories.

Several hours have been devoted to interviewing former Florin residents. The focus of the interviews was on the forced internment and life in the relocation camps, but our questions touched on other issues. We asked about their immigration to the United States from Japan, pre-war experiences, resettlement after the war and personal philosophies. We also wanted to record the stories of the people left behind. They were friends and neighbors who watched in anguish as the trains transported the community away.

We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their 70's, 80's and 90's. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness.

We owe special thanks to James F. Carlson, former Assistant Dean of American River College and to Jackie Reinier, former Director of the Oral History Program at California State University in Sacramento. Without their enthusiasm, encouragement and expertise, we never could have produced this collection of oral histories. We also wish to acknowledge the project members, volunteers, the Florin JACL which contributed financial support, Sumitomo Bank for their corporate donation, and the Taisho Young Mens Association which contributed some of their assets as they dissolved their corporation on December 31, 1991.

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

### INTERVIEWER

Kinya Noguchi was a Deputy Sheriff with the rank of Lieutenant before his retirement. He is a member of the VFW Nisei Post 8985. He graduated from Sacramento State University in Business Administration with graduate work in Public Administration. He is a member of both Sacramento and Florin Chapter JACL.

### INTERVIEW TIME AND PLACE

Susumu Satow agreed to be interviewed as part of Florin JACL and CSUS Oral History Project, and Kinya Noguchi conducted the interview. The interview was conducted on January 11, 1996, at the home of Kinya Noguchi. The interview went very well, and was able to complete it in one session.

I talked with Susumu Satow at a later date, and he expressed a very strong sense of feeling, that he didn't say enough about battles the Nisei Soldiers fought in France and Italy, wanted to add an excerpt in details. Mr. Satow was advised by Chairperson Marion Kanemoto, that she would welcome any documents, that he might submit to be added to the oral interview.

As the interviewer, I felt it necessary to add his personal experience to complete the interview.

### TRANSCRIBING, EDITING AND WORD PROCESSING

Susan Takahashi, Florin JACL member.

## PHOTOGRAPHER

The primary picture was reproduced by Dan Inouye, member of Florin JACL.

## TAPES AND INTERVIEW RECORDS

Copies of the bound transcript and the tape will be kept by the Florin Japanese American Citizens League and in the University Archives at The Library, California State University, Sacramento, California 95819.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

During World War I, Susumu Satow's father, Riichi Satow, immigrated to the United States from Chiba-ken, Japan together with his father and brother. He was only 17 years old when he arrived, and went to work on various farms in Napa Valley. After a few years, he went to Japan to marry Chieko Miera. They first took up residency in Sacramento, but decided to move to San Francisco where he found employment with a Japanese newspaper company. The cold weather of the Bay area did not suit him, and the family moved back to Sacramento, and lived in the Oak Park area, near which is now the location of the Campbell Soup Company.

Riichi's brother moved next to him, and everyone including the post office would get their names mixed up, so Riichi added the "w" to his name.

Each of the two Sato(w) families had nine children, and Susumu was the second eldest in his family.

Susumu attended the Pacific School, Sacramento, and later the Edward Kelly School in Mayhew. The family moved to Mayhew at the time Susumu was attending grammar school. There Riichi Satow purchased 20 acres but it had to be purchased under Susumu's name because no Issei could purchase land under the California Alien Land Law. They began raising strawberries, bushberries, and blackberries. According to Susumu, the work was hard and it was very difficult to make a living, especially during the Depression.

Susumu states that he did not encounter any racial discrimination, and got along quite well with the Caucasian students at Kit Carson Junior High and Sacramento High School. He participated in sports and did very well in baseball. However, as war neared, things got a little tense among the students at Sacramento High. He doesn't recall anyone calling him a "Jap."

In 1942, the Satow family was first evacuated to the Pinedale Assembly Center, California. While there, Susumu received his high school diploma from Sacramento High School. Later the family was transferred to their permanent camp in Poston, Arizona.

While in Poston, Susumu volunteered to go work in the sugar beet farms in Idaho. He stated that the work was hard, the weather was cold, and he didn't make much money. The people living in the area didn't say anything, but just stared at them.

When the Presidential Order came out to accept Japanese Americans into the U.S. Army, Susumu volunteered to join the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. He was inducted at Fort Douglas, Utah and shipped to Camp

Shelby, Mississippi and assigned to H Company, 2nd Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Company H was a heavy weapons unit that specialized in 30 caliber machine gun and 81 mm mortar; 81 mm mortar was usually located right behind the front line, giving support to the riflemen wherever needed. Susumu was a member of the 81 mm mortar squad. He saw combat duty in France and Italy; during a combat mission in France, Susumu was wounded, and spent three weeks in a hospital.

During Susumu's assignment in Italy, many civilian Italians stared at him with a very puzzled look, but in time recognized that there are Italian-Americans as well. He recalls vividly that during a battle in Italy, a Nisei standing next to him named John Yamamoto from San Diego was hit and killed instantly.

Susumu recalls how well and gallantly the Nisei soldiers fought, and each time one was killed or wounded, it was an emotional thing that touched him deeply. He also mentioned that the retreating German army would leave behind their wounded in public places or schools, hoping that the U.S. Army would take care of them.

The one thing that Susumu mentioned that all U.S. soldiers feared was a land mine known as the "deballzer." When you stepped on one of these land mines, you lost your manhood.

Susumu's assignment during the course of battle in Italy and France was as the lead person to lay communication wire from our gun position to the front line; this was very hazardous duty.

During the battle to rescue the Lost Battalion in France, Susumu was still in the hospital recovering from his previous wound.

After the battles in France, Susumu and his outfit were reassigned to Italy to break the Gothic Line and Po Valley Campaign.

When the war was about to come to an end, Susumu was told to report back to headquarters. There he saw the gruesome sight of Mussolini and his mistress hung upside down in the city square. Susumu felt that this was a very inhuman act.

Returning from the front lines, he observed a group of Mongolian P.O.W. who fought with the Germans. They could hardly believe their eyes. But I told them about Buddha and they were convinced.

He found an interesting couple in Milan. The wife's name was Toshiko, and she had sang in the Milan opera. She was a native of Stockton, California.

With the war in Europe coming to an end, PFC Susumu headed back to Camp Beale, California where he was discharged and he then settled in Chicago.

After two years in Chicago, Susumu moved back to Sacramento and took up farming, raising strawberries and grapes. He then went to work at McClellan Air Force Base as an apprentice trainee in electronics.

Susumu married lovely Lily Higuchi in 1946, and they have four children.

Susumu stated that he didn't take an active role in the church or community while he was working because his work often took him away from home, but in 1978, he joined Nisei Post 8985 Veterans of Foreign Wars. After his retirement in mid-1980s, Susumu served as Commander of Nisei Post 8985 VFW. Susumu also felt the need to continue his personal quest to eulogize the Nisei Veterans who served in World War II, and chaired the dedication of a project to have the State of California, Division of Highways rename the portion between Manteca and Salida on U.S. 99 as the "442nd Regimental Combat Team Memorial Highway."

Susumu volunteered to help build the Poston Camp Memorial. He also helped Ted Kobata move a Heart Mountain barracks and rebuild it for display at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles.

Susumu continues to serve the Nisei VFW Post in many capacities, including that of Chaplain, Poppy Sales, and in other fund-raising activities. He served as "Deputy Chief of Staff" at the VFW District level. And also appointed to various positions at the State level.

Presently Susumu is spearheading a fund raising project for the Nisei Veterans Monument to be built in Los Angeles. He is also presently involved with the Japanese American Archival Collection at the State University at Sacramento.

Susumu has very strong feeling about the importance of preserving what happened to the Nikkei people during and after World War II and wishes to leave a legacy that our grandchildren and great grandchildren will cherish forever.

(Session 1, January 11, 1996)

(Begin Tape 1, Side 1)

NOGUCHI: This is a continuation of the Florin Japanese American Citizens League Oral History Project with the California State University at Sacramento. Today's date is January 11, 1996. We are at the home of Kinya Noguchi, the interviewer, 808 Skipper Circle, Sacramento, 95822. I will start the interview with Sus Satow by asking his full name.

SATOW: My name is Susumu Satow.

NOGUCHI: We'll start the interview by asking your parents' name.

SATOW: My father's name was Riichi Satow and my mother's name was Chieko. Her maiden name was Miera.

NOGUCHI: What part of Japan are they from?

SATOW: They were from Chiba-Ken, Japan.

NOGUCHI: What year did they come over to the United States, do you remember?

SATOW: My father came during World War I, at the age of about seventeen, I think that is what I recall him telling me. He worked here with his father and his brother at the various

SATOW: farms, Napa, California included, and my father went back to Japan, married my mother, and then they came back to California and started their family life.

NOGUCHI: Where did they take up their residency after your father got married to your mom?

SATOW: Sacramento; they first started off in Sacramento. It wasn't really that great here, so the family moved to San Francisco, where I have a very slight recollection of the things that happened. He worked for a Japanese newspaper there.

NOGUCHI: How long did they stay in San Francisco, do you recall?

SATOW: Not too long, about a year or a year and a half, because my father got sick; he had pneumonia, and they thought it was best to get out of the cold area of San Francisco. So therefore they came to Sacramento again, and that is where they started the strawberry farm.

NOGUCHI: So what part of Sacramento did they move to first?

SATOW: They first moved to a place called Oak Park. There used to be a Japanese community at Oak Park.

NOGUCHI: Do you remember the approximate location of that farm area? As to what it is now?

SATOW: It is quite developed now, but at that time, it was just south of the old Pacific School, which is in Oak Park.

NOGUCHI: Is it close to the old State Fairground?

SATOW: No. It was on old Franklin Boulevard. Franklin Boulevard is there today still.

NOGUCHI: What street crossed Franklin Boulevard?

SATOW: Let's see, that was not too far from Campbell Soup area.

NOGUCHI: Okay, that gives us an idea as to where your dad farmed.

SATOW: My uncle was there also at the same time.

NOGUCHI: The uncle that you are mentioning right now, is he the uncle that goes by the name of S A T O?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: Was there a reason for your dad and your uncle to have the "w" . . .

SATOW: Well, what happened was that their mails, they didn't live too far apart, and their mails used to get mixed up wherein some of my father's mail would go to my uncle's side and some of my uncle's would come to our side, so my dad decided to put a "w" on the end. So there would be a difference in the two Sato families.

NOGUCHI: People wonder, "how come one Satow family has a "w" and one doesn't, and yet they were brothers."

SATOW: Yes, that was the basic reason.

NOGUCHI: While they were farming, how many children did your mom and dad have?

SATOW: My mother and father had nine, and my uncle had nine as well.

NOGUCHI: Who was the oldest?

SATOW: Chiyo, who lives in Gardena today.

NOGUCHI: And going down the line,

SATOW: Then would be me, and then my sister Toshiko, who used to work for Dr. Muramoto as a nurse.

NOGUCHI: Is she living in Sacramento now?

SATOW: Yes, she is retired in Sacramento. Then would come Hannah, my sister, who was a teacher. Then Bill, Oscar, Leo, Teddy, and finally Ernie.

NOGUCHI: And do they all live in Sacramento?

SATOW: Well, Ernie still works in the Bay Area. He works for CalTrans.

NOGUCHI: Do the rest of them all still live in Sacramento then, or in the area?

SATOW: Except for my older sister, who lives in Gardena.

NOGUCHI: As you were going to school, what school did you start with?

SATOW: Pacific Grammar School.

NOGUCHI: All of you attended Pacific Grammar School?

SATOW: Not really, I was the last to attend Pacific Grammar School, because then my father had bought a twenty acre

patch in what was known as Mayhew.

NOGUCHI: So at this point, your family moved from the Oak Park area into the Mayhew area?

SATOW: Right, and then I started attending Edward Kelly School there.

NOGUCHI: When you attended the school there, were there very many Japanese people living there at that time?

SATOW: In Mayhew, there was quite a few. I would say about better than half were Japanese American students.

NOGUCHI: What did your father farm?

SATOW: Strawberries.

NOGUCHI: Twenty acres? That's an awful lot of strawberries to try to raise.

SATOW: Well, maybe four or five acres, and the others were in bush berries like young berries, raspberries, blackberries and that type of thing. Also, the grape vineyard was being started as well at that point.

NOGUCHI: Do you recall some of the people that lived in your neighborhood there?

SATOW: There was the Abe's that had an almond orchard and across that was the Yamasaki's, who live in Chicago today, and they were also growing strawberries. And then going up the road, there was what is today known as Happy Lane,

SATOW: and there were the Kitada's, the Matsumoto's, the Furuiki's, Oganeku's, Toguchi's, all Japanese Americans, of course. And the Kobata's further on back.

NOGUCHI: So Happy Lane borders the Mather Air Force Base?

SATOW: Right.

NOGUCHI: So Mather Air Force Base was already there at that time, or were they just establishing that?

SATOW: They had abandoned that site, it was inactive. The property still belonged to the Air Force, but there was nothing happening there until the world situation kind of got a little more tense and then they started to reactivate Mather Air Field, making it into a training base.

NOGUCHI: So that was probably in the late thirties that this started?

SATOW: About 1938 or 1939, something like that.

NOGUCHI: So what year did you move to the Mayhew area then?

SATOW: About 1930.

NOGUCHI: So going back a little bit, what year did your parents leave from Japan to the United States, do you recall?

SATOW: Gee, let's see, I would say probably my father got married to my mother and came to the United States in about 1921, something like that.

NOGUCHI: So it was after World War I then?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: So the other Sato, they were there already, or did they come after you?

SATOW: I think they both went back to Japan at the same time, and both decided to come back to the United States at about the same time. They were going to work together, so therefore we were neighbors as far as I can remember.

NOGUCHI: So when you people moved to the Mayhew area, so did the other Sato family?

SATOW: That's right.

NOGUCHI: I see. Do you recall when you were attending grammar school, the students' reaction toward you as a Japanese?

SATOW: No, it was normal.

NOGUCHI: There was no derogatory remarks or incidents of being picked on?

SATOW: No. There was maybe a little bit of racial difference, you know. They knew that we were Japanese and we knew that they were hakujins, that kind of thing. But otherwise, quite normal, I would say.

NOGUCHI: When you were in grammar school, what kind of activities did you participate in?

SATOW: I was a baseball crazy sort of a guy, and so that's what it was. Baseball at recesses, during noon hour. The first

SATOW: thing we did was choose sides and play baseball. That was about it.

NOGUCHI: So how did the Caucasian kids react? What was the racial breakdown of the student body?

SATOW: Let's see, there were Portuguese, there were Mexican, the Durant family; Caucasians, like the Taylor's and families like that.

NOGUCHI: So it was pretty well-divided?

SATOW: Yes, there were no Blacks. Let's see was there a Chinese? I think there was one Chinese.

NOGUCHI: So you people got along fairly well with each other then?

SATOW: I think so, although I think if I remember right, the Chinese was recognized as a Chinese at that time.

NOGUCHI: Did he make any derogatory remarks?

SATOW: No, we didn't make any derogatory remarks, no.

NOGUCHI: So over the grammar school years, things went fairly well. How was the situation on the farm?

SATOW: The farm was rough. We all had to help cut the grass, things like that, especially during the Depression.

NOGUCHI: Having a large family, you kind of stuck together and did things together?

SATOW: Yeah, naturally we didn't like to go out and work, but nevertheless we had to do that, so we did it. (Laughter)

NOGUCHI: How was your family, as far as doing things together, church activities, Japanese activities? Was there anything going on besides school in the community?

SATOW: There was a Japanese school and they had classes every Saturday, all day long.

NOGUCHI: Did you attend?

SATOW: I attended, but I really didn't learn too much about it. Some used to joke that "gee, we came to eat lunch" or something like that. (laughter)

NOGUCHI: Yeah, I know, we did the same thing.

SATOW: Then on Sunday evening, we would have church service, Mayhew Japanese Baptist Mission. The pastor then was Reverend Igarashi, he used to live in Sacramento and he used to come out and have service. Maybe it was Saturday night, I think it was Saturday night.

NOGUCHI: Were your parents Buddhist when they were in Japan, do you remember?

SATOW: Yes, they were.

NOGUCHI: And they changed after they arrived in California?

SATOW: Yes, when he came to Sacramento, when they first established a home in Sacramento, near Oak Park, there was a Reverend Muraoka who was the pastor of the Baptist Church there and so my father came under the influence of

SATOW: Reverend Muraoka and he decided at that point that that was the religion he was going to follow and so since then, he has been very close to it.

NOGUCHI: Both of your parents?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: Everybody in your family followed the same?

SATOW: Yes, in fact my brothers are far more active than I am. Oscar has gone to Japan and taught school in Kaizu, Japan, and in the process he also worked with the Christian church there, and tried to help them out.

NOGUCHI: So after you finished grammar school, you attended Kit Carson Junior High School, which was a little distance from Mayhew?

SATOW: Yes, that was about, I would say about ten miles away.

NOGUCHI: How did you get there?

SATOW: We had to learn how to drive. We would get our student driver's license. So with the family car and all the neighborhood kids that had to attend junior high school, we attended.

NOGUCHI: Did your father stress how important school was?

SATOW: Oh yes, very important. Education, that's the key, he said.

NOGUCHI: So what kind of background does your father have, as far as education?

SATOW: He is more of a self-taught man. After all, he came to the United States when he was about fifteen, I think, something like that. And so he didn't really have the chance to attend school in Japan. But he did a lot of reading and lectures, things like that.

NOGUCHI: So he encouraged you to get your education?

SATOW: Oh yes.

NOGUCHI: So how did you do at Kit Carson Junior High School? How did you get along?

SATOW: I got along pretty good, no problem. I used to like to play baseball again and so my friends were athletic-type and we got along.

NOGUCHI: Did you join the school baseball team?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: What position did you play?

SATOW: Outfield mainly. There used to be a pretty good pitcher named George Babich and he went on to play pro league for awhile. The Stanich brothers, as well. They became pretty well known in Sacramento.

NOGUCHI: What about basketball or football?

SATOW: No, kind of stayed away from those. Football, I played but you know I really didn't know the fundamentals of football, so I just went in and played, that's about it. Basketball

SATOW: was the same way. I didn't know how to dribble, but nevertheless I got in there and played.

NOGUCHI: So then came the high school and you attended Sacramento High School just about the time when things were starting to get kind of tense, huh?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: Was there any kind of reaction from the other students? The student body as far as the numbers changed quite a bit, where the student body was mostly Caucasians at Sac High?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: Did you feel any kind of reaction?

SATOW: They didn't give me a bad time. I got along pretty well with them. Some, you know, I had arguments with, but nothing related to race or anything like that.

NOGUCHI: So they never came out and really called you a Jap or anything?

SATOW: No.

NOGUCHI: When you graduated high school from there, where did you go?

SATOW: Okay, I got my diploma. We were evacuated the last week of May, I believe. We were evacuated to Pinedale and that is where they sent the high school diploma. That's where I

got my diploma.

NOGUCHI: So you graduated from Sac High in June 1942, but you were evacuated prior to that?

SATOW: Right.

NOGUCHI: How did you feel about the whole situation, when the war came about and you were already eighteen, or thereabouts?

SATOW: I recognized a lot of things that was happening. In fact, my father . . .

NOGUCHI: What was your true feeling when they told you the war had started and how did you feel about the whole situation?

SATOW: Well, I think I took a lot of cue from my father. My father said that it was going to be very difficult for the Japanese living in the United States and that happened, you know, the evacuation and all that. But I kind of took it, you know.

NOGUCHI: You weren't devastated by it?

SATOW: I wasn't devastated. It happened and so what can we do about it, you know. At that point I think most of the people felt that there was no point in resisting, because you get rolled over, like a steamroller coming at you. You have to get out of the way, you know. I think that was kind of the feeling that we had.

NOGUCHI: Did most of your family feel the same way?

SATOW: I think so. My father did.

NOGUCHI: No negative feelings toward the way you were being treated because of the war between the United States and Japan?

SATOW: I don't think so, no.

NOGUCHI: What about the rest of the people within that community, did you notice anything or feel anything about people feeling very negative about being taken out of their homes?

SATOW: Well, they probably felt negative, like I did, but at the same time there was nothing we could do about it, and so therefore we needed to just roll with the punch. They tell us to go to a certain relocation or they move us to a certain relocation point, we'd better comply. Nothing we could do about it.

NOGUCHI: So nobody made any kind of statements of how you were being treated or anything like that?

SATOW: No. At that time the JACL made a statement that we should cooperate, you know, that we should not resist. I think most people followed that advice.

NOGUCHI: But you don't recall anybody making any kind of statement or stating that this shouldn't happen, or they couldn't do this to us?

SATOW: Well, no, I read in the newspaper about Hirabayashi and

SATOW: Yasui cases and things like that, that there was some resistance. But at the same time, I suppose I was a little bit defeatist. I thought that they were not getting anyplace doing that and so as long as the army come and pick us up and send us to a place, that is what we have to do.

NOGUCHI: During that executive order time, the Army stated in the order that you were allowed only two pieces of luggage. So what happened to all the things your family accumulated over the years?

SATOW: We had to leave it in the house. Of course, I don't think my dad felt that it would stay there. Somebody was going to come in and take it, and that's what happened, but that's what we had to do. Just leave everything in the house and go.

NOGUCHI: You didn't dispose of any of the things?

SATOW: No, most things we didn't. We just left it intact.

NOGUCHI: What about your crop for that year?

SATOW: That was lost.

NOGUCHI: Nobody took over or was willing to harvest the strawberries or anything?

SATOW: Well, no there was, like Bill Taylor came and made an agreement with my dad to take care of it, you know. But

SATOW: he took care of it only to the extent that he picked the crop and sold it, made a profit and that was it.

NOGUCHI: So what part of it was given to your dad?

SATOW: None at all.

NOGUCHI: None at all. So there was just an agreement that he would harvest it and whatever money . . .

SATOW: That was his. No questions.

NOGUCHI: What happened to that land during the time you were gone?

SATOW: Okay, in our case, my uncle had twenty acres and my dad had twenty acres. What my uncle did was to sell ten acres and my dad gave five acres to my uncle so that we each had fifteen acres apiece, and paid for the land. This way it would be free and clear. So therefore there was no payment to be made or things like that. So that's the way we were able to hold our land.

NOGUCHI: How did you purchase that land?

SATOW: Well, there used to be an open field out there . . .

NOGUCHI: But there was a special order, law that said that if you can't become a citizen of the United States, you weren't able to purchase land.

SATOW: Yes, so it was bought in my name and the same with my uncle. I think it was bought in Seiji's name.

NOGUCHI: So the land was purchased while you were still a

youngster then?

SATOW: Yes. We had to have a lawyer to take care of that for us and it was Mr. Coyle, who was a lawyer and he did everything for us in our favor. So we had a good lawyer.

NOGUCHI: So you did have people who were willing to do this for you during that time when your father purchased that land?

SATOW: Oh yes.

NOGUCHI: That was good. So far as purchasing the property, you had no problems whatsoever?

SATOW: No, no negative, no nothing.

NOGUCHI: That's good. So over the years you prospered quite well then?

SATOW: I wouldn't say we prospered, because the strawberries were very cheap. Very cheap. We just made a few pennies per box, so to speak, I guess. So things were tough. But we used to sell our bush berries to Coffee Oshima, and he would give us credit so that during the winter, we could buy groceries through his grocery store and pay it off during the season with whatever profit we had made. So it was a good arrangement.

NOGUCHI: Yes, that was. So, as far as the strawberries then, you picked it by yourself, your own family?

SATOW: Well, we used to hire Filipinos.

NOGUCHI: Oh you did. I see. When the family was ordered to evacuate then, all the people of that area decided that this was the only alternative and so you packed up your things, locked everything up, and got on a train and headed down toward Pinedale?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: When you arrived in Pinedale, what was your reaction?

SATOW: Well, there were strange peoples, you know, from the Northwest and all that area. They were all watching us as we came through the gate.

(End Tape 1, Side 1)

(Begin Tape 1, Side 2)

SATOW: Our young people got in a fight with the Northwest people.

NOGUCHI: Do you recall some of those people?

SATOW: Oh yeah, quite a few of them.

NOGUCHI: Do you recall any of their names?

SATOW: No, I can't recall their names, but I had a lot of friends.

NOGUCHI: Were they from Washington or Oregon?

SATOW: Yes, from Washington and from Oregon, Hood River, Kent, Bellevue, Auburn, Tacoma too. So we got to be known as sort of a temperamental bunch of guys that came in.

(laughter)

NOGUCHI: You ever heard the word \_\_\_\_\_, beat people up?

SATOW: Yeah.

NOGUCHI: I guess you're wondering why, because I was in block with the Washington people there, so I know what the situation was.

SATOW: I made a lot of good friends with those people, you know.

NOGUCHI: Did you ever get involved with the sports there?

SATOW: Softball.

NOGUCHI: How about sumo?

SATOW: No, no sumo. In Poston I was involved in sumo and I was pretty good because I used to tip people over that were a lot bigger than I. In those days, I was wiry.

NOGUCHI: You were much taller than the Nisei kids, huh?

SATOW: Yeah.

NOGUCHI: Do you remember the Kuwabara brothers, Paul and George?

SATOW: Oh yeah. They were big.

NOGUCHI: Very, very big and strong. Do you remember any of the incidents or something that happened to you or what your reaction was when you first went into Pinedale?

SATOW: Well, I remember the Northwest people watching us as we came in and we had to register. So I thought, well, this is it. Here is where we are going to stay. Of course I didn't know that we were going to move about a month and a half later to a permanent relocation center, but I think that

was my impression.

NOGUCHI: Did the temperature affect you any?

SATOW: Not really. Sacramento is more or less the same as Fresno. Of course when we went to Poston now that's another story. That was a lot hotter.

NOGUCHI: So as far as Pinedale was concerned, the menu didn't bother you at all? Like the breakfasts they served?

SATOW: In the beginning it was very poor.

NOGUCHI: I guess you recall the fried raisin and carrots that they served for breakfast?

SATOW: Yeah, it was a luxury to get a grapefruit once in awhile, they used to give us grapefruit cut in half.

NOGUCHI: So after staying in Pinedale then you were evacuated to your permanent camp in Poston?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: So the whole family was still kept together at that point?

SATOW: Oh yes.

NOGUCHI: And do you recall some of the things that happened to you during the time you were in Poston?

SATOW: Well, there's a lot of things. Number one, when the sugar beet contract was offered, I volunteered for that. So I went to Idaho on the sugar beet contract.

NOGUCHI: So you left the camp?

SATOW: I left the camp in September. I think we went into the camp in about July, August, something like that.

NOGUCHI: So you left to go to camp in Idaho?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: What year was that?

SATOW: Autumn of 1942.

NOGUCHI: How long did you stay there?

SATOW: Through Christmas, through New Years, and about middle of January, I think, we came back.

NOGUCHI: Who did you work for there? Was it a corporation or a company?

SATOW: It was a company.

NOGUCHI: And what did you do, take the sugar beets out of the ground?

SATOW: Yes, we harvest the sugar beets.

NOGUCHI: So it was all done manually?

SATOW: Manually, with a knife.

NOGUCHI: Hard work.

SATOW: Hard work. We worked from sunrise to sunset.

NOGUCHI: You made lots of money?

SATOW: Nope (laughter). What happened was the sugar beet was very small that particular year. The reason why it was small was because there was no fertilizer to put in. The

SATOW: reason why there was no fertilizer to put in was because of the war effort. A lot of the material had to be used for explosives and that kind of thing. Therefore they didn't fertilize it and the size was very small. So you really had to work hard to get any kind of tonnage. So I came back still broke. (Laughter)

NOGUCHI: Did you go with a bunch of fellows?

SATOW: We went as a group.

NOGUCHI: Was there any kind of reaction from the people in that area?

SATOW: There was. We had to keep to ourselves. We were told not to try to mix because there could be ill feelings, and there was an impression that we were not wanted. A feeling that way, you know.

NOGUCHI: So in your spare time where did you go? What was the closest town to that?

SATOW: The first place we went to was a town called Preston. At that time it had a population of about 12,000. They had one movie house.

NOGUCHI: Did you ever go into town?

SATOW: Yes. What happened was that four of us worked for a farmer, Mr. Schwartz, and he was pretty nice. Every weekend on Saturday night after work, we would get off of

SATOW: work kind of early, take a washtub bath and then kind of dress up and we would go in town and he would treat us to a restaurant dinner. Then after that he would take us to a movie and then come on home. He used to do that every week. He was very nice.

NOGUCHI: As far as the people in town there, if you went shopping, what was their reaction?

SATOW: We really didn't go shopping.

NOGUCHI: What about when you were sitting in the theater, was there any kind of remarks made as to who you were or why you were there?

SATOW: No.

NOGUCHI: So you felt that maybe those people were more understanding than people living in California?

SATOW: Oh yeah, but still you could feel that they were looking at you like, "who's this guy" or you know that kind of thing.

NOGUCHI: But they didn't make any overt remarks or anything?

SATOW: No.

NOGUCHI: So after you finished that, you came back to camp?

SATOW: Okay, let me go a little further. After Preston, which was at the end of November, I felt that I didn't make enough money, so there was another opportunity to go to Marsing, Idaho, which is on the other side of Idaho. It's on the

SATOW: border of Idaho and Nevada, I think somewhere around there, right by the Snake River.

NOGUCHI: So it's in the southern part of Idaho then?

SATOW: Caldwell was nearby. We heard that they got big sugar beets and you make your money, so I decided, "well I'm going to go there" because I didn't make much money at Preston. So I went there, but come to find out the ground was already frozen, and so to dig the sugar beets out of the frozen ground, was a tremendous task (laughter). Then to cut the leaves, the greens off the head was another tough job because you had to cut through some of the frozen top of the sugar beets. So that was tough. So I really didn't make any money then either. Finally we got through and about the middle of January we were shipped back to Poston.

NOGUCHI: By saying you didn't make much money, how much were you paid hourly?

SATOW: It was a contract, we were paid by the ton. I can't remember actually, but it was about a \$1.05 or \$1.10 per ton, or something like that.

NOGUCHI: So it was kind of like minimum wages, or worse?

SATOW: We worked as a team too, so we had to split it four ways.

NOGUCHI: So then you went back to Poston, and then from there did

you decide to go to Keenesburg?

SATOW: Yes, but there's a story. When I got back to Poston in January, I found out there was a big turmoil going on that the Japanese Americans were going to be inducted. There was quite a controversy about this. Saburo Kido had gone to Salt Lake City and the JACL had approved sending a resolution to Washington to ask that Japanese Americans be allowed to serve in the Armed Forces.

NOGUCHI: So it didn't come from the President himself?

SATOW: It was a resolution requesting it. And then the President agreed to it and issued an order that allowed the 442nd to be formed.

NOGUCHI: So that's when the questionnaire came out?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: Where you decided whether you were going to volunteer or not volunteer?

SATOW: Yes, so when I got back, I had heard a lot of stories. My dad got pretty involved in that too. Once Mr. Kido came back to Poston, they forced him to attend a four block meeting and they were asking him questions as to why he took that stand, you know, and they were condemning him and everything else. And so my dad got up and tried to defend Saburo Kido and he got booted out of the meeting.

NOGUCHI: Mr. Kido got kicked out?

SATOW: No, Mr. Kido was in there still but my dad, who stood right next to him to try to defend him, the radicals called him bakayaro. They forcibly kicked my dad out, so my dad had to retreat into his block 208 barrack. That's what he did. But especially block 208 was very radical.

NOGUCHI: It got very tense at that point?

SATOW: Yes. So when I volunteered, I was out of block 208 and I was the only one from Sacramento. Well, I take that back. Roy Takai volunteered, and he volunteered into the MIS. I volunteered into the 442nd.

NOGUCHI: At that point then in time, as far as the camp, this was where things started to change and feelings started to come out about how the people felt about the war between United States and Japan?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: And their reaction was that you shouldn't volunteer then?

SATOW: Yes, that's right. Because in 208 there was quite a few kibei and I think people that were sympathetic with Japan.

NOGUCHI: That was block 208 then?

SATOW: Yes, block 208.

NOGUCHI: That was a significant number then, 208?

SATOW: Oh yes. So you talk to anybody today about block 208 and they will remember it as the radical block.

NOGUCHI: So a lot of those people from that block then left Poston and were sent to Tule Lake?

SATOW: Yes, and from there to Japan. And then from Japan back to the United States (laughter).

NOGUCHI: They made the whole route, huh?

SATOW: I have no bad feelings against them, but that's the way it was.

NOGUCHI: So when you volunteered for the army, where was the first place you went as far as your induction?

SATOW: That was Salt Lake City. But what happened prior to that was that my family, my father, mother and whole family, had relocated to Keenesburg, Colorado.

NOGUCHI: They left too at that point?

SATOW: Yes, but I stayed behind thinking that my induction was imminent, so I should wait. So I waited, but after waiting about a month and nothing happened, I decided that I should go to Keenesburg and work there until I was called. Then when I am called, I could go. So that's the way it was.

NOGUCHI: So your family was in Keenesburg for quite a while then? That's quite a big load for your dad to undertake, being in a strange part of the United States, with all the young

NOGUCHI: children that he had, you being next to the oldest. That was quite a task for him, huh?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: How was his English, pretty good?

SATOW: Broken English.

NOGUCHI: What did he do when he got to Keenesburg?

SATOW: He worked as a tenant farmer, I guess you call it. He worked for a farmer, doing different things.

NOGUCHI: And he made enough money to support the family?

SATOW: Yes. Then we also had a friend in Denver, a Kodama, and they are the ones that sponsored my family, my parents, and introduced them to the farmer in Keenesburg. That's how they got together.

NOGUCHI: Was he a Japanese farmer?

SATOW: No, hakujin. German background. Then once he got himself settled in Keenesburg, he called his brother, the other Sato, and they moved out to Keenesburg as well.

NOGUCHI: It was at that point that you were inducted into the United States Army?

SATOW: Yes. Well I worked in Keenesburg, driving tractors and working the combines and that kind of thing, for about a month.

NOGUCHI: Then you volunteered?

SATOW: No, then I got notice that I should report to Fort Douglas, Salt Lake City, at a certain date. So then I had to travel from Denver to Salt Lake and went into the base there. That's where I met lots of other people from Seattle, Tule Lake, some came from Poston and so forth.

NOGUCHI: So how long were you there then, Fort Douglas?

SATOW: About three or four days.

NOGUCHI: Then you were reassigned for basic?

SATOW: Then I was sent to Camp Shelby, Mississippi. But before you do that, they give you two weeks, or something like that, to go home and clear things up and things like that. I had a chance to go to Tule Lake because I had a lot of friends at Tule Lake. So I took a leave to Tule Lake and met a lot of my friends there and then went to Camp Shelby.

NOGUCHI: Did you have any problems going from Salt Lake to Tule Lake?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: You encountered quite a bit of problems, huh?

SATOW: Yes, especially the train ride from Salt Lake to Sacramento and then I had to change trains and go from Sacramento to Klamath Falls. There was animosity, I remember.

NOGUCHI: Were you in uniform then?

SATOW: I was in uniform, yes.

NOGUCHI: Still you met a lot of resistance?

SATOW: Yes. There was one guy that tried to get very aggressive and somebody came and helped me. Another guy that was in New Guinea, he was coming back, his leg was in a cast and he was the guy that defended me.

NOGUCHI: So how long did you stay in Tule then?

SATOW: For about a week. I stayed with Shig Nakashima's family.

NOGUCHI: At that time when you were at Tule Lake, was the situation pretty calm?

SATOW: Pretty calm. None of the radicals had moved in yet.

NOGUCHI: But they were moving people out of Tule Lake?

SATOW: They were starting to.

NOGUCHI: Then you went back to Fort Douglas for reassignment?

SATOW: No, from there I went back to Denver to say good-bye to my family and then from there went on to Shelby.

NOGUCHI: And you were in Camp Shelby for how long?

SATOW: For about nine months, I guess, before we went overseas as a unit.

NOGUCHI: Do you recall your basic training days, as to what happened, anything you can remember out of the normal?

SATOW: No, nothing unusual.

NOGUCHI: Were they all nisei?

SATOW: Yes, all nisei.

NOGUCHI: And your CO was Caucasian?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: You all got along pretty good?

SATOW: Oh yeah.

NOGUCHI: Most of them were from the stateside, nisei?

SATOW: No, there were a good many from Hawaii, a large contingent from Hawaii. I would say the majority were from Hawaii.

NOGUCHI: Were they from the 100th?

SATOW: No, from the 442nd.

NOGUCHI: How did you get along with the people from Hawaii?

SATOW: I got along pretty good. There were some people who did not.

NOGUCHI: Because they were more free thinkers and not as conservative as the niseis stateside.

SATOW: Yes, you can't try to put on airs and that kind of stuff with them, because they will tell you. (laughter) But I got along pretty good with them. I even learned their language too (laughter). No, I really didn't, but I got along pretty good with them.

NOGUCHI: So from there after you finished basic training and got

NOGUCHI: your assignment, do you recall a unit that you were assigned to?

SATOW: Yes, I was with H company. I was first assigned to D Company and just before we went overseas, the first battalion was held back to train other people that were going to be coming in. Those people that were going to be drafted, they would be coming in, they would act as the cadre. So I was shipped from D Company to H Company. H Company became my home. They were both heavy weapons. So quite a few of the D Company people shifted over with me. So I had a lot of company.

NOGUCHI: Then you went over in what time of the year? Do you remember the ship?

SATOW: Yes, it was Liberty Ship and it went up and down and we got seasick.

NOGUCHI: What time of year was it?

SATOW: It was in May, I think. Then we hit Iran, Africa which had already been captured, a safe area. So for the first time in my life, I recognized the Arab people. Then from there we went to Naples, Italy.

NOGUCHI: Then from Naples you got into your first combat?

SATOW: Right. First day in combat.

NOGUCHI: How did you feel?

SATOW: Scary (laughter).

NOGUCHI: Scared, I bet. So the infantry was in front of you?

SATOW: Yes, being heavy weapons, we were right behind the front line riflemen. But we had to have an observer with the rifle people and I, being the last to come to H Company, I was the wire leader. So from our position to the observation post, I always had to lay the wires. So I would be up there with the observer, seeing all the things that were happening and giving support where it was necessary. Of course the man in charge was usually a staff sergeant and so I just did what he told me to do.

NOGUCHI: So were you involved in any of the major combats or where shooting was going on, where you got shot at?

SATOW: Oh yeah, sure. Artillery shells coming and exploding right next to me and things like that.

NOGUCHI: So you saw some of the things that infantrymen would face in the line of duty, combat?

SATOW: Oh yeah.

NOGUCHI: Were you ever injured?

SATOW: I got hit in the back in France. An artillery shell, a tree burst that sprayed down on us and it caught me in the back. So I got to stay in the hospital for about three weeks on that, I guess.

NOGUCHI: From Naples, Italy where you landed, then you went up the boot of Italy, or did they transfer you to another place?

SATOW: Well, from Naples we had to move to the front line. The 36th Infantry was in the front line and we had to dovetail into their position and they would move back and we would move forward. So that was the first day. The Germans seeing that happening apparently because our F Company in moving ahead, walked into a ravine where the Germans were observing from both sides and once they were in position, they started shooting. We were right in back of that. So that was my first day in action. So F Company got hit pretty bad. What happened was that the 100th Battalion, which was our first battalion, because the first battalion stayed back at Camp Shelby as training. So they filled in as first battalion and they came and made a wide sweep and got the enemy from the side and the rear and routed them, so that relieved the pressure on F Company so we got saved on account of that.

NOGUCHI: So from there, after that firing was over, then did you keep moving up from one position to the other?

SATOW: Yeah, well the next day we moved up, but we could see once we moved through where the 100th were, we could see the devastation that the 100th had made. I think it

SATOW: was impressive, you know it makes you realize that this is the real thing. You're gonna die, or you're gonna kill people, things like that. That's when it really starts to hit you.

NOGUCHI: Did you ever get a chance to, or ever have occasion when you actually saw the German soldiers firing at you?

SATOW: Well, there were times when you wondered, "gee, I wonder if someone is taking aim at me" because you're in sort of a wide open area and like in my case, laying the wire to a certain position, I had to go through some open areas and I did used to wonder if somebody was taking aim at me right now. So I would hurry things.

NOGUCHI: Was this over terrain that was either agriculture or just an open area where it was grazing, or was there a village? How was it laid out?

SATOW: Open field was usually farmland, like wheat field already cut and the piles of hay stacked, things like that.

NOGUCHI: Did you see very many grape vineyards?

SATOW: Yes, there were grape vineyards and terraced hillside, so people used to jump from terrace to terrace to get to the enemy position.

NOGUCHI: So the description you're giving is how Italy was laid out, as far as land marking?

SATOW: And then there is the mountainside where there is a lot of mesquite-looking trees and so you try to hide behind that and make your movements rather than in the open.

NOGUCHI: So the enemy fire was pretty heavy at that point then?

SATOW: There were times when the firing was pretty heavy.

NOGUCHI: How about from the air?

SATOW: Airplane? No. The only time that the enemy airplane would come would be at night time, because they can't operate in the open during the daytime because they would get shot off, or our airplane would challenge it. They didn't have that kind of power, so they used to come at night and try to drop some bombs at a certain location, you know and things like that. But that wasn't too much of a threat, because they didn't know what they were really seeing anyhow.

NOGUCHI: So how about the people living in this area that you were going through, how did they react?

SATOW: Usually, they are puzzled because they see Oriental faces, you know. They wonder what is going on and they can't understand until you tell them that in America there are Italian people and a lot of Italians in the U.S. Army as well. Then, "Si, si, comprende" and things like that, they understood.

NOGUCHI: So were they friendly towards you?

SATOW: The Italian people were very friendly.

NOGUCHI: That's interesting. At that point then, as far as the Italian army, they weren't in existence at that time then?

SATOW: No, they weren't.

NOGUCHI: So it was strictly between the United States and Germany then?

SATOW: Yes, and then we had a lot of partisans on our side, the mountain fighters.

(End Tape 1, Side 2)

(Begin Tape 2, Side 1)

NOGUCHI: Can you continue from there?

SATOW: Okay, where was I?

NOGUCHI: You were in Italy and your reaction with the Italian people and the partisan people.

SATOW: I was talking about the partisan, yeah. When things got tough, they were ineffective because they would slowly start melting away, you know. But still they were able to give us information as far as terrain, and what you might expect, and that kind of thing, so in that respect I think they were very helpful.

NOGUCHI: So as far as the movement of the battle, was this an area where you would come across any land mines?

SATOW: There were cases of land mines.

NOGUCHI: In the strategic areas then you would encounter the land mines?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: What about through the towns and cities?

SATOW: Not so many land mines.

NOGUCHI: There were no snipers?

SATOW: There was a possibility of snipers, but the Italians were on our side anyway and so they would tell us. A lot of times the Germans would leave their wounded in some public place like schools or something like that, hoping that we would take care of them and we did that.

NOGUCHI: So as far as your street to street fighting then, you didn't get involved in too many of those?

SATOW: No, in Bruyeres, France initially there were some street to street until we cleared it out.

NOGUCHI: At this point then, you didn't have any street to street fighting at all?

SATOW: No. Like there's a township there, you either took the hillside surrounding that and thereby force the Germans to get out. They had to; because otherwise they would get captured.

NOGUCHI: So that was the strategy that was used at that point?

SATOW: Yes. The land mine was kind of devastating and we used to call it "deballzer", because when you step on it, the pellets would go up and it would "deball" you. (laughter) So that's what many of us were afraid of (laughter).

NOGUCHI: I can't blame you there. That's the most important part of your body at that point, huh?

SATOW: Yup.

NOGUCHI: So how long were you in the battle of Italy then?

SATOW: Well, let's see. We moved up slowly all the way up to the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Then from there we were ordered to go back and board a ship to go to France. But before that happened, we got a lot of replacements from stateside. That's when my cousin, Steve, and all the rest of the people, Chester Abe, and so forth came over.

NOGUCHI: In the battle in Italy, were there any of your company or your platoon that were injured or wounded? And what was your feeling? Was anybody killed?

SATOW: Oh yes, there were a lot of KIAs, there were people that were wounded, there was a friend of mine named John Yamamoto from San Diego, who was about five foot from where I was. He dug his slit trench there; I had dug mine right next to a haystack. We heard a shell coming and so I dove into my hole; he dove into his hole, and the shell

SATOW: landed right in his hole and blew him to pieces. That was kind of. . . . But those days, you know, things like that happened and you feel bad about it, but you block it out and go to the memorial service after the campaign and remember these kinds of things, but then you go on to the next campaign.

NOGUCHI: There are some who do break down, though, huh?

SATOW: Oh yeah, that's right.

NOGUCHI: But the Nisei have a quality where they don't show emotion, they're very stoic. But there are times when you do break down.

SATOW: Oh yeah.

NOGUCHI: I think that's probably the most difficult part of being in combat, is seeing your fellow comrades being wounded or killed in action. Something that you never lose, huh?

SATOW: Yes, that's right. In fact as you grow older, you know, you become more sentimental.

NOGUCHI: Very emotional, huh?

SATOW: Yes, that's right.

NOGUCHI: So after you left Italy, was it the same unit?

SATOW: The same unit, the 442nd H Company. We went to France.

NOGUCHI: How many of the people that originally started with you were still with you when you left for France? Was it

pretty much intact?

SATOW: Uh, no, it wasn't intact. I talked about John Yamamoto. There were several people that got wounded and there were others not as close to me, and yet I know that they were killed. So before we went to France we had replacements and they came to fill in these points. The point is, I used to think, "Now I can get out of laying the wires because it will have to be given to somebody that came in the latest". Come to find out I couldn't do that because the next guy that came was an old man, about thirty four years old, he had two kids at home and he's already kinda scared to do a lot of things, and he felt like he couldn't tackle this, and so I continued on.

NOGUCHI: So you were in a very precarious position, then, huh?

SATOW: A lot of times I was, yes.

NOGUCHI: Laying the wire, you had to go ahead of everybody else.

SATOW: Yeah, I know one time I was crossing an open field and I got fired upon from quite a distance, fortunately, because the dirt would kick. You could see it kick. So when I seen that, I ran, of course, with the wire behind me, you know. I got through the door and thought, gee I was lucky.

NOGUCHI: So when you got to France, where did you land?

SATOW: In Marseilles, France. From there we took a train, boxcar.

NOGUCHI: At what point was this, now, as far as the war itself?

How far was the United States Army as far as the battle combat line was pretty much into France already?

SATOW: Yeah, it was almost to the German border.

NOGUCHI: Which is Bruyeres?

SATOW: Yes, along that area, and our first duty was Bruyeres. it was sort of a hub of the railroad and transportation, and all that. So the Germans wanted to defend it pretty good. So our job was to capture that, to take that town, you know. So from Marseilles, in a boxcar, up to Epinal or a little beyond that, and from there we went on a truck, one of the big army trucks, and went on into the largest mountain, still a safe area, for overnight encampment. Then from there we went into battle action for the battle of Bruyeres.

NOGUCHI: So you were still in the heavy artillery?

SATOW: Weapons, heavy weapons, yes. Means in my case, 81 mm mortar, and the other heavy weapons was machine guns, thirty caliber.

NOGUCHI: Not the fifty?

SATOW: No, thirty caliber. So our machine gunners were right with the rifle company, you know. They were in support. And we were eighty one, firing mortars over into the enemy, or

wherever the tactical situation warranted.

NOGUCHI: When you say heavy weapons, you're not involved with the actual artillery itself?

SATOW: No. Like our 522nd was the artillery battalion and they were the big guns.

NOGUCHI: So they were quite a bit behind the lines itself?

SATOW: Yes. The gun crew was behind because they can't afford to be losing big 105 Howitzers and things like that. But I think we had the best artillery support. They were good.

NOGUCHI: Were they all Niseis too?

SATOW: All Nisei.

NOGUCHI: What about the tank outfit? Did they have any Niseis involved in the tank unit?

SATOW: No, if we needed any tank support, we would call for tank support and they would come.

NOGUCHI: But they were all Caucasians?

SATOW: Oh yes. It would be like first armored division, or something like that.

NOGUCHI: So actually when you went into France, then your first combat was in Bruyeres?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: You were there how long then?

SATOW: I was there through the capture of Bruyeres and we went

SATOW: beyond and then I got hit, so I went into the hospital. I stayed about three weeks at the hospital.

NOGUCHI: Which hospital was that?

SATOW: I can't remember. It was in France, yes. It was also at a location where they had "on-sen", what is that?

NOGUCHI: Oh, hot springs?

SATOW: Yeah, hot springs. So that was good.

NOGUCHI: So you were there how long?

SATOW: I was in the main hospital about a week and the convalescent hospital for about two weeks.

NOGUCHI: Then you were sent back up to the front lines again?

SATOW: Yes. By then, the rescue of the lost battalion had happened while I was in the hospital.

NOGUCHI: Oh, did any of your outfit get shipped to rescue the lost battalion?

SATOW: Oh yes, the whole unit was in that operation, one way or another. Some, like I Company and K Company took the brunt because they were the actual front contact point. I remember I was in the hospital and I started seeing all these nihonjin casualties coming in and I wondered, "Gee what's happening, what's happening", you know. Then finally I got the word that they were in the operation of the rescue of the lost battalion. It was a vicious fight.

NOGUCHI: Soon after that, were you sent back to your original unit again?

SATOW: Yes, and by then the outfit was so decimated that we needed replacement, and I don't think we were a fighting unit, because we lost so much, wouldn't be effective. So they shipped us to southern France, that's where the Champagne Campaign comes in. Because it was a stationary front, the town was Nice, the riviera of France, and then also the replacement came in and filled in the gap, and then we had to go through a training process. So we did that and in the meantime, we still had our casualties and all that, but it wasn't severe like a real battle.

NOGUCHI: So this took place after the rescue of the lost battalion?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: Was this after the gothic line or prior to the gothic line?

SATOW: No, before we went back to Italy, you know, because after the champagne campaign, then it was almost spring, we were shipped back to Italy, to the final gothic line. That was quite a campaign in itself, yes.

NOGUCHI: So were you part of the gothic line? What part of the gothic line were you at that point? Were you sent up with the troops to the gothic line?

SATOW: No, the whole unit went to Italy and we knew that we were going to push on from Pisa north in the Appinese Mountains. At that point we didn't know how or why, but we knew that General Mark Clark came and made a very visible tour of our area, so that I think that the enemy knew that the 442nd was back. So by knowing that, the Germans would have to shift their reserves to our area to stop us. The main thrust was going to be in central Italy, to Bologna and Po Valley. That was the strategy, but we beat that by the fact that we were able to capture our objective and move on out and move along further and cut over to Po Valley. That's what happened.

NOGUCHI: Because that battle of gothic line only took, what?, a few hours?

SATOW: Well, the first initial contact was made and in about half an hour and we had taken the main objective, you know. Then thereafter of course you still had to move forward and there were positions that we had to clear, so forth. But the main objective was captured in about, they say, thirty two minutes. To get to that point though, we had to climb a very steep mountain.

NOGUCHI: Almost straight up, huh? Something like eleven or twelve hundred feet?

SATOW: Yes, it was real high. I remember the night before, we had moved into position. We marched into position and from there we started climbing, climbing, climbing. I remember the fireflies flying around.

NOGUCHI: And all this was done at night.

SATOW: At night, yes, very quietly. So by daybreak we were supposed to be in position to attack.

NOGUCHI: After that was the Po Valley?

SATOW: Once we cleared that, we made a dash to Genoa, which is on the left side. We went into that town and then dashed over the mountain into Po Valley. Then from there was Milan then to Turin. By then the Germans were already defeated anyway. They were coming out with their hands up.

NOGUCHI: So the gothic line was probably one of the last major battles?

SATOW: That was the last major battle. The point about it is, you know, once you're way up there on the mountain and look back and see that steep cliff, by then it was daybreak, I could see everything. I thought to myself, "Gee, I hate to get wounded up here because there's no way they're going to be able to evacuate me". And we tried that for one person who got hurt pretty bad. I was one of the litter

SATOW: carrier, and boy, that was tough because it's a cliff, and so the back people would have to lean down to keep it up and the front people had to keep it up and the guy on the right side would have to lift up and the guy on the left side had to keep it down too. But about fifty yards from where the aid station was, his tongue started hanging out, you know, and we thought he was a goner, and so we really double timed down all the way to the aid station. We got him in there and the first aid men immediately started working on him. But I don't think he made it.

NOGUCHI: Do you remember his name?

SATOW: No, I don't.

NOGUCHI: He wasn't from the Sacramento area then?

SATOW: I don't know where he was from, but he was a mainlander, I know that. I kinda wish I had gotten his name, but we tried very hard to get him down. That was. . . .

(Break)

NOGUCHI: We'll continue on from the point where Sus Satow and some of the men assigned to his outfit are bringing the men who were wounded in the battle of the gothic line. Will you continue from there, Sus?

SATOW: Well, once we got him down, I had to get back up there and it was again a very steep climb, but I can't go back empty

SATOW: handed. So I picked up some mortar shells, six of them, and put them in my pack and carried it back up. Once I got back up there, the squad sergeant says, "Hey we need some more ammunition". So another fellow named Papoose Sadonaga and I, we both went down and got another load of ammunition and started to go up. But in the process of going up, we got fire from a sniper. But I kept on going up and once I got back to the guns position and I looked around and Papoose was not there. I thought, "Oh my God, he probably got hit". So I rushed back and to the point where the sniper fire had come and hollered out for Papoose and he said, "Yeah, I'm behind the rock here". So I went behind the rock and he was scared, you know, because of that fire. I guess you can't blame him, but anyhow I assured him that it looked like the sniper wasn't firing anymore, so we could go on up. So, we went back up there again. And that was that, I guess.

NOGUCHI: So after you completed capturing or taking the gothic line and went down to Po valley, where did you go from there?

SATOW: Well, once we got into Po Valley, the war was declared over in Italy and so we drove into Milan and I think I was among the first group to be in Milan. One of the jeep drivers came back and said "Hey, there's Mussolini hanging

SATOW: on the square". So, I wanted to see that, so I asked if he could take me back there again. So he did and sure enough, there were three figures: one was a driver, the other was a mistress and the third was Mussolini, hanging feet first from a square. That was very gruesome. I wondered about man's inhumanity to man, I guess. I thought that was wrong.

NOGUCHI: Do you know who was responsible for that, was it the Italians, Germans?

SATOW: It was the Italian partisan. They captured the three as they were trying to escape toward Switzerland. So they were driven back into the town square. They probably were dead at that point and so they just went and hung them upside down.

NOGUCHI: From there after viewing that gruesome incident, where did you go from there?

SATOW: Then we went back to Milan, where the rest of the people were organized and from there I was picked to represent the 442nd to be part of a honor guard, I guess. There was about six of us from the 442nd and some ceremony was going to take place in Milan. I can't remember for sure what that ceremony was, and so we were billeted at a rather nice hotel and we waited there for instruction. But

SATOW: the ceremony never did take place as I can recall. But that was pretty nice.

NOGUCHI: At this point in time how long were you in the service at that point?

SATOW: Let's see, about two years.

NOGUCHI: Quite a while, huh?

SATOW: Yeah.

NOGUCHI: Was there any field promotions during that time?

SATOW: No, still a PFC (laughter).

NOGUCHI: I'm surprised they didn't make you a staff sergeant or something.

SATOW: Well, what happened was that when I went into the outfit, I was at the very tail end of the ladder and so as people got knocked off, you moved up. But I never did get to the position where I had responsibility.

NOGUCHI: From Milan and then when you completed, were you kind of disappointed about not being in the ceremony, but after that where did you go?

SATOW: After that, let's see, we went to a place called Getty. As the German prisoners of war were coming in, we were supposed to search and confiscate any contrabands, cameras, pistols, and things like that. Then they were put in camp. So my job was to search these prisoners. I did

SATOW: that and also a little bit of R&R, recreation so forth. So the 442nd formed a baseball team and I thought I would try out for that. So I made the team, but I was a reserve, so I didn't get to play. That really used to gripe me. So I got to hate the manager because I didn't get to play (laughter). But the manager was from Salt Lake City. Apparently he played semi-pro and I guess he knows his baseball, but I felt like, gee I oughta be good enough to play for this team, you know. But I didn't.

NOGUCHI: How did the German POWs react when you were shaking them down or searching them?

SATOW: They accepted defeat. The war was over and they were happy. Although there was one particular soldier that told me, "You people are lucky that you won."

NOGUCHI: Some of them spoke English then?

SATOW: Yeah.

NOGUCHI: Do you remember or recall the age group of some of these German POWs?

SATOW: They were very young, perhaps about fourteen or fifteen years old. And they were very old, very old. Of course, you know when the young soldiers came with their hands up, they were crying because they were scared. Also, we had the job of guarding a prison camp and so I used to go to the

SATOW: gate, spend my four hours and there was an old German that used to come and sit with me and talk to me. He was telling me that he came from the Russian side of the occupation and so therefore he was afraid to go back, but he had his family there so he felt like he had to go back. But he used to bring me coffee and things like that. So I got to know him pretty well. I wish I had taken his name down and address and all that.

NOGUCHI: So how did they initially react when they see that the American soldiers were all Niseis? Were they kind of startled?

SATOW: They were startled. I'll tell you what, there were a group of Mongolians that were captured. The Mongolians that were captured by the Germans and were talked into fighting for the German army, so therefore they would act as supply and that type of rear echelon type job. They were captured and they'd see us and wondering what was going on, you know. They wouldn't believe that we were Japanese Americans, or even Japanese. So one of them I noticed had a Buddha sort of necklace on and so I pointed that out and told him who that was, you know. That's how I convinced him that I was Japanese.

NOGUCHI: So their facial feature was strictly Mongolian?

SATOW: Oriental, yes. More Asian Chinese.

NOGUCHI: That's interesting. There were quite a few of the older ones there too?

SATOW: There were quite a few that were captured.

NOGUCHI: And they wore a German uniform?

SATOW: Gee, I can't remember whether they did or not, I don't think so. They were sort of a laborer type.

NOGUCHI: So during the time you were in Italy through the entire campaign, you didn't come across any Italian soldiers then?

SATOW: No, no Italian soldiers.

NOGUCHI: So they were completely out of the picture by the time you were there?

SATOW: Yes. I can't remember any Italian units or anything like that that we fought against. There was another interesting case when we went to Milan. There was a man that came and talked to us, said his wife was Japanese and she would like to meet us. So we followed him and went way out to the suburb and finally came to a nice home. We went inside and this lady happened to be a Toshiko something, I can't remember. She was a singer in the opera in Italy and was from Stockton, her younger days was spent in Stockton. So that was interesting, you know.

SATOW: She gave us dinner and all that. It was very nice.

NOGUCHI: Did she speak much English?

SATOW: Yes, she spoke English with a sort of accent.

(end Tape 2, Side 1)

(start Tape 2, Side 2)

SATOW: A Japanese embassy worker's family had visited her and they were saying that the war was already lost. So therefore they were going to have to get out. So that was kind of interesting.

NOGUCHI: So after you finished your duties in Italy, where did you go from there?

SATOW: From there, it was a question of who was going to be able to go home first. The people who were in the army before the war started, naturally had the highest point. So that they were allowed to go home. I think I had seventy two points or something like that. So I was in the second group that was able to go home. But before that happened though they were looking for recruits to get into the MIS. And there were some that did take that offer, and I considered that too. I was thinking, "Gee this might be interesting. I would be able to go to Japan". But then again there was an urge to get out of the army too at the same time. So I chose that latter route.

NOGUCHI: So what year was that, when you were being discharged, or leaving the European campaign? Was the campaign in Germany already through?

SATOW: Yes, it was all through. The war in Italy had ceased first, and then immediately after, maybe two or three days later, the war in Germany had collapsed. That's when the 522nd made their name, you know, and freed the Jewish prisoners.

NOGUCHI: So then you were on your way home by this time.

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: After considering that offer to go to MIS.

SATOW: There were a few who did, but I thought, "Gee, I have had enough of war. I ought to get out". So I did.

NOGUCHI: Then from that point, where did you go from Europe? Back to New York?

SATOW: New Jersey, Kilmer. Then from Kilmer we flew through Texas, Dallas I think it was, and then flew on to Beale.

NOGUCHI: So what point of time was this as far as year and month? Were people already coming back to Sacramento?

SATOW: They were just coming back to Sacramento, a lot were just coming back. And so we were temporarily stationed at Camp Beale and that is the same flights of airplanes that came across and one crashed in Auburn and there were two

SATOW: of my friends in that. They both made it out alive, one was Raymond Tanaka and the other was Shimazu, I can't remember his first name. But they were hurt pretty bad, but they made it. So I went to visit them before I departed for Denver and to Chicago. That's where I finally settled, in Chicago.

NOGUCHI: So you went from Beale back to Denver and then Chicago? And that's where you decided to settle after the war?

SATOW: Actually I went to Denver and then from there I decided I would go to Chicago and start my life there. So that's what I did.

NOGUCHI: So your family was already back in Sacramento then?

SATOW: No, they were still in Denver. While I was at Beale, I took a lot of my Hawaiian friends and we visited Sacramento. There were quite a few Nihonjins already back, and some of the restaurants were already open too. So that's where we went to eat, I remember.

NOGUCHI: So after you decided to stay in Chicago, then what did you do from there?

SATOW: From there, I worked for an outfit called the Advertising Metal Display and they made tool boxes, advertising displays like windshield wiper displays and that kind of thing.

NOGUCHI: What year was that?

SATOW: That was in 1946.

NOGUCHI: You were there in Chicago for how many years?

SATOW: About two years. In 1948, I decided to come back to Sacramento.

NOGUCHI: That's when you settled in Sacramento?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: Then where did you go from there, in Sacramento in 1948?

SATOW: In Mayhew, back to the community.

NOGUCHI: Your family was already back?

SATOW: Yes, they were back and there was a farm that was opening up, or that was on sale. It used to belong to the Yamasaki family, but they lost it because of the war, you know, no payment, things like that. So the bank took it over. So I was able to pick that up and start my farming.

NOGUCHI: So you started as a farmer?

SATOW: Yes, growing strawberries and the vineyard was already in there and so forth. But I soon recognized that we were not going to make me . . . (laughter) it was pretty tough. So then, at that point there was an interesting offer at McClellan Air Force Base. They were offering apprenticeship training courses. So I applied for that and you had to take a test and I qualified. I always was

SATOW: mystified by radio, how it was able to pick it up and rebroadcast it. So I was interested in that and so I took electronics.

NOGUCHI: So you were there for four years?

SATOW: After four years I graduated and then I was offered a mechanic's position in the Air Force.

NOGUCHI: So you stayed there at McClellan Field?

SATOW: Yes, I think it was McClellan Field in 1972, rather than 62. So that's where I learned all my skills as electronic technician.

NOGUCHI: As far as your work and that was pretty well established, what year did you get married then?

SATOW: That was back in 1947.

NOGUCHI: Oh, you were already married at this point then.

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: Where was your wife during the time you were in the army?

SATOW: She was in Sacramento. She went to Sacramento Senior High, same time I did.

NOGUCHI: So how old is your oldest son, Vernon?

SATOW: Vernon is probably getting close to 50. He was born in 1949.

NOGUCHI: So you established your family at that point and you were

going to school and where was Lily working then?

SATOW: She worked for the state for many years.

NOGUCHI: So you gave up your farming and went to electronics training. Outside of your work and raising a family, what activities did you start in at that point then? Were you actively involved in the JACL?

SATOW: No, very inactive. I remember the VFW coming and trying to recruit me, but I thought that I had enough of war and don't need to be reminded, so I didn't.

NOGUCHI: So what year did they try to recruit you into being active in the VFW?

SATOW: They tried then, I remember Eddie Hamakawa and somebody else coming and visiting me to try to talk me into joining the VFW when they first organized.

NOGUCHI: When they first organized? That was almost fifty years ago.

SATOW: Yes, but I didn't take that offer. Gee, when was it? Early 1950s. But I finally joined in about 1978 or something like that.

NOGUCHI: I see, so you became a member in the latter part of the seventies then.

SATOW: Yes, and I wasn't active at that point because I was still working, but once I retired though, I became very active.

NOGUCHI: So you became very active in the VFW and went on to go through Chair, Chaplain, Junior Vice, Senior Vice, and Commander? Then you took on the responsibility of building that memorial in Poston, plus the one in LA?

SATOW: Well, what happened was Heart Mountain, they found two barracks. And the Japanese American National Museum wanted to dismantle that and move it to Los Angeles for display. So they asked for volunteers and so I, along with Ted Kubata and gee, my memory is getting bad. Anyway, three of us went to Heart Mountain to dismantle that. We did that and moved the whole barrack over to Los Angeles.

NOGUCHI: That was quite a project.

SATOW: Yeah, that was quite a project and we rebuilt it in Los Angeles for display. Then there were two barracks, one of the barracks are being held, stored, so that when the main museum is built, they are going to rebuild that in conjunction with the museum so that they can show it as an historical display. That was quite a project.

NOGUCHI: So this came before the Poston monument, then?

SATOW: No, the Poston monument first happened and we built that. And then this one came and so we went. Then the kiosk building of Poston happened, so we volunteered for that. So the Heart Mountain was in between those two projects.

NOGUCHI: So you slaved in that one hundred twenty degree weather to put up that monument? That's quite an accomplishment.

SATOW: Oh yeah, very hot. It was so hot that we decided, "Hey what we'll do is get up about three o'clock in the morning and work until about noon, then quit." But once noon came, there was so much other things to do, we couldn't quit! So we kept on working until sundown. So we worked pretty hard.

NOGUCHI: That monument is near Parker, Arizona?

SATOW: Yes, it's about twenty miles south of Parker, I guess, something like that.

NOGUCHI: That was near the original Poston camp?

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: So you devoted a lot of time to build a monument, plus the moving of the barracks and then you were involved with the VFW? In all those years, I know you volunteered for a lot of the odds and ends, and special projects, took on the responsibility of Commander and again as Chaplain.

SATOW: Right now for the state, I'm the Vice Chairman of the Poppy Sale for the department, so that kind of keeps me pretty busy because I have to write letters. Especially where the districts are behind in sales, you have to build them up and so I write letters to them.

NOGUCHI: And then you got involved in that Japanese project for the Sac State University Archives too.

SATOW: Yes.

NOGUCHI: You have to be commended for that too. It takes a lot of work and dedication. I commend you for that too, the time and effort. As far as the church, the Mayhew Baptist Church, has been in pretty good shape and your service on the Board of Trustees still goes on.

SATOW: Yes, it still goes on. There are supposed to be elections this coming Monday, and I have been canvassing to try and get somebody to replace me as the Chairman, but so far I haven't found one yet.

NOGUCHI: Are you planning to publish any publications or books in the future?

SATOW: Well, I am in the process of writing a sort of memoir, starting from a few years before World War II, on up to maybe the end of the war. But let me tell you about the most impressive thing that happened as far as my association with 442nd. That was when President Trumann called the 442nd over to Washington D.C. to present the seventh Presidential Unit Citation onto our colors. No other unit in the history of the U.S. Army has ever been called by the President to come to Washington

SATOW: D.C. for this kind of an honor. So what happened to our unit was something very outstanding, I think.

NOGUCHI: Was that photograph in all the different displays, where President Trumann was there putting on the Unit Citation?

SATOW: Yes, that's it. It was quite an historical moment. Of course I was discharged at that point, but I had seen it in a movie house, where the President was pinning this and there were Kurahara twins from Sacramento and one of them is in the picture. That was good too, but anyway I thought that was very historic. And I think there was a recognition by the President of the United States that he knows what we were fighting about. So to show that kind of support, I think he called the 442nd over and did that.

NOGUCHI: This concludes the oral interview with Sus Satow. Was there anything else that you would like to add regarding the oral interview?

SATOW: Another thing, when the people responded to the call to arms for the 442nd, alot of people wondered why we had volunteered, you know. And some thought that this is just glory for us, and things like that, but that was not the case. Most people had a very good reason why they volunteered and that was because of the fact that we were in an internment camp and we needed to show to the public

SATOW: that we are just as American as anyone else. And one way to do this was to volunteer into this unit and go as a unit and establish some kind of record. And in this way be able to fight back those that would call us "japs" and would have any doubts. So I think that was the main purpose of why most people volunteered.

NOGUCHI: At this time then if you don't have anything else to add, I would like to thank you, Sus Satow, for taking time out to let us interview you. As the interviewer, I would like to thank you very much. This concludes the oral interview with Sus Satow.

SATOW: Thank you.

### My Early Years

My name is Sus (Susumu) Satow and I am a second generation Japanese American (Nisei). I was born in Sacramento, California and grew up in East Sacramento. Today, that area is known as Rancho Cordova but before the housing development occurred, it was a thriving farming community. Once there were vast acres of vineyards, hop fields, prune, pear, almond and walnut orchards, vegetable truck farms, and in my family's case, strawberry and bush berry farm. Our small community was called Mayhew.

My father came to the United States as a young lad of 17, joining his father and his younger brother who was 15. They worked as transient laborers, working the various farms from Arizona to the Oregon border. The three went back to Japan after a few years. We teased them that they must have made a bundle because shortly thereafter the two brothers each married. They both decided to return to America with their new brides with visions of staying for a long time, if not forever. They worked hard and saved enough to buy some adjacent acreage in East Sacramento. Over a 20 year period, nine of us were born into the family. My uncle's family also had 9 children.

Before the war my parents' ties to Japan were very strong. That was understandable since their parents, brothers, sisters and friends resided in Japan, and that was the country in which they were raised. I was aware that I had many cousins and relatives in Japan. Once the war started, my parents realized that their children's loyalty must be to the United States. So, my parents encouraged us in that way. Once the war was over, they reestablished contact with relatives in Japan and proceeded to send them food packages, for they knew the difficulties they must be facing.

My Early Years--Pearl Harbor--Evacuation: Pinedale, Poston--  
Sugar Beets Contract--The Loyalty Questionnaire--The Satow  
Family in Keenesburg, Colorado--Camp Shelby, Mississippi--  
First Day in Combat--Crossing the Cecina River and Hill 140--  
Livorno--The Pink House--Close Call--Appendicitis--Pisa,  
Florence, Arno River--Bruyeres, France--Champagne Campaign,  
Gothic Line and the Final Push--Post War Period--Poston  
Monument/Kiosk--Heart Mountain Barrack

To help supplement my family's income, I worked in each type of farms mentioned during the summer months. At 14 years of age I remember picking pears at the Buckley Pear Orchard for 22.5 cents an hour, 10 hours a day, 6 days a week. In those days there was no such thing as a Child Labor Law. The foreman of the ranch was a Japanese person named Mr. Tagami. It was said that Mr. Buckley entrusted that responsibility to Mr. Tagami because the Japanese people had a reputation of being hard-working and dependable. Mr. Tagami hired Japanese Americans from the local area and we worked hard for our money. As a 14 year old, the 14 foot ladder that I had to move around was more than a match for me. Sunday was our day off. In the afternoon, I would go and watch the Mayhew baseball team play against a neighboring Japanese American team. That was the highlight of the week and we all looked forward to it. At the age of 16, I was playing for the Mayhew baseball team. It was an exciting period in my life.

### **Pearl Harbor**

On Sunday afternoon, December 7, 1941, I was helping my father clean and shovel the ditches in a strawberry patch on the far southeast portion of our ranch. From the direction of our home, we saw the figure of Rev. Igarashi walking toward us. His mannerism and his pace indicated that he was not on a social visit. As he reached us, omitting the normal Japanese-type greeting, he stated that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor. My father related that the industrial might of America was so great that Japan would not win. They discussed at great length the problems that the Japanese living in the United States would now face. They noted that Niseis were serving in the Army. What happened to them would be an indication of what would happen to us. If there was a wholesale discharge, watch out. They recognized that for their children, the United States was their home and their country. It then followed that they must conduct themselves in a way that would be in the best interest of their children. Immediately after Rev. Igarashi left, my father

walked over to his brother's home to relay the bad news.

The future was unsure, especially for Japanese Americans living in the United States. Finally, when the United States placed an embargo on Japan, Japan retaliated by attacking Pearl Harbor.

The State Department immediately classified all male Japanese Americans 4C, which means "Enemy Alien" who were no longer eligible to enlist in the Armed Forces. Wide rumors and accusations floated all around. The Honolulu Star Bulletin reported that Japanese Americans were planting their row crops so that when seen from the air, they pointed in the direction of a military air base. The San Francisco Examiner carried editorials saying that Japanese Americans had settled around major military bases in California and were a threat. The Reader's Digest included such articles in their monthly publications. There was absolutely no truth to all these allegations. The House Un-American Activities Committee, the congressional body that investigates all Un-American acts, declared that Japanese Americans could be a source of fifth column activities (sabotage) at a crucial moment. When a Japanese submarine surfaced off the coast of Santa Barbara and fired a few rounds of high explosives along the coast, a major newspaper reported that a lantern was seen swinging from atop a mountain. That was absolutely and totally false. When an ethnic group starting shooting at Japanese Americans on the streets of Sacramento, one newspaper carried the headline that "local group declares open season on local japs", an inflammatory and irresponsible reporting.

The next day was a school day. We wondered what was going to happen at school. My sisters were afraid to go. Our father instructed us to remain normal. It appeared that every young Japanese American student had apprehensions, but none skipped school. It turned out okay. We all listened to President Roosevelt's Declaration of War speech. . . "I hate war. . . Eleanor hates war. . ."

Since the age of 16, I was well aware of the world situation -

Hitler's ambitions in Europe, Mussolini's conquest of Ethiopia, Japan's conquest of Manchuria, and the invasion of North China. Japan's slogan was "Asia for the Asians". I thought that the English, French and Dutch had no business being in Southeast Asia, India, or indeed Africa and other parts of the world. What was wrong with Japan was that she wanted control of all of Asia. I thought that the invasion of North China was wrong. Time Magazine was my source of information. Miss Cox, my grammar school teacher, would save Time and any world news magazines for me. I dreaded the thought that Japan and the United States might one day go to war against each other. Japan probably recognized that war was inevitable and made the attack on Pearl Harbor. As Admiral Yamamoto said, "We have awakened a sleeping giant. . ."

In the meantime, our traveling had been restricted to a 25 mile radius, there was no night travel, and we were ordered to turn in our guns and disable short wave radios. All of us were visited by the FBI. A search team came to look for contrabands and any suspicious material that might link us to Japan.

We had heard stories of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) making surprise visits to Japanese American families. Many Issei fathers were picked up as suspicious enemy aliens with the flimsiest of excuses. The FBI agent found a flashlight in one of the households. The charge was that it could be used as a signaling device. The accused were not given an opportunity to pack up any daily necessities. They were hauled into a vehicle and whisked away. The next morning's newspaper was headlined, "Local Japs Picked Up As Subversives." The implications were that they were all guilty, when in reality, not one case was proven and not one had any connection with the enemy.

We knew that our family would be visited by the FBI soon. Our father already had a small handbag packed with the necessities, just in case. He was one of the leaders among our Japanese American community, so we expected the worst. One afternoon when I returned home from school, there were a number of FBI agents all

over our farm. My younger brother, Leo, was explaining to the head agent about a black book on the mantle. It was a translated version of the Holy Bible in Japanese. Entering our home, on the left wall was a large artist's rendition of Jesus Christ and on the wall straight ahead was DaVinci's "The Last Supper". I believe to this day that those influenced the FBI to reconsider and not arrest our father. Those were scary moments. The day before, we had buried my Japanese kendo (fencing) head and body protective gear in an open field. An FBI agent, recognizing the freshly dug dirt, re-dug it. They accepted the explanation that it was for a Japanese sports activity. Of course, any material that could be dumped into the "outhouse" was done so. We felt certain they would not go digging in there! The kendo equipment did not fit through the hole, so we came to the decision to bury it in the open field. At our neighbor's home, they found some spent 38 caliber shell casings. They turned their home inside out but could not find the gun they suspected. Mr. Miyasaki was afraid they might take him away also. We were all relieved when the agents finally boarded their vehicles and drove away.

#### **Evacuation: Pinedale, Poston**

Under Executive Order 9066, all persons of Japanese ancestry living in the Washington School and Edward Kelly School District were ordered to be at the Washington School playground on May 29, 1942, by 10:00 A.M. That would be the start of our evacuation to a destination yet unknown, and probably for the duration of the war. We took with us only what we could carry. Our future certainly did not look bright at that time. My father, being the type of person that he was, irrigated the strawberries the day before we were to depart. The season was just peaking. Whoever came in to finish the crop could make easy money. We sold most of our possessions dirt cheap. For example, a used refrigerator sold for \$3.00. The family car, a 1931 Buick sold for \$25.00. What we could not sell, we stored in our house. We boarded the windows and doors, but we knew that the house would soon be broken into. In our neighborhood, we kept one

old jalopy to transport us to Washington School, which was about 6 miles away. Back and forth the driver went that morning until all the neighbors were transported. The jalopy was discarded at the school yard. I noticed someone driving it off.

We were all herded into a train. The train moved south. We arrived at a place called Pinedale, California (just north of Fresno). For the first time in my life, I was to see what appeared to be an internment camp. The perimeter was double-fenced about ten feet high. Each corner had a guard tower. A machine gun was pointed down the corridor of the double fence. The guard carried a rifle. I thought how terrible this was. The people from the Northwest (Washington and Oregon) were already there. Many came to watch as we were processed in. We were told that this was a temporary place. A more permanent location was being built in the interior of the United States. I thought that this was better than the horse stables that I heard some were being forced to stay in. But whatever it was, we had no choice. It was like a big steam roller coming at you. One couldn't fight it. You had to get out of the way. As we were processed, we were assigned a number.

Our family was assigned two adjacent rooms in a barrack. There were rows and rows of barracks. We had to learn to live in a communal way: shower stalls, toilets, a laundry room, a mess hall for mass feeding, etc. There was no privacy whatsoever. Some of the ladies showered between 2:00-3:00 A.M. to gain some degree of privacy. Our food was terrible. It later was discovered that the Administrator was selling the meat on the "Black Market" to augment his salary. As an example, breakfast was grapefruit and toast. After the skullduggery was discovered, our food variety improved. However, I never did acquire a taste for mutton. I don't think very many did. I needed spending money, so I found work as a dishwasher in a mess hall serving people who came from the Northwest. There, I met and made new friends from the Northwest. People from the Northwest suffered from the summer heat. In about late July, the Northwest people were ordered to Tule Lake, California.

In July 1942, we from Sacramento, boarded a train to a destination unknown to us at that time. We were ordered to pull down the shades as we traveled through Barstow, a military town. In the morning, we arrived in Parker, Arizona and debarked. There we found that we were assigned to the Poston War Relocation Authority (WRA). We were herded onto a military truck and transported approximately twenty miles south to Poston Camp II. The Satow family was assigned to Block 208-D.

The typical weather in Arizona during the summer is very hot. The people immediately organized to establish some form of governing body. A farming co-op was formed. Chicken and pig farms were started and melons and many varieties of vegetables, including Japanese daikon, nappa, gobo, bean sprouts, etc. were grown. Bean sprouts became my favorite vegetable. Any surplus was traded to the Army for rice. The desert for the first time showed farming potential. Today, 1996, that entire area is a farming community.

During the short time that I was there, I found employment making adobe bricks that were to be used to build school buildings. There was abundant clay material. It was mixed with straw and water and put into a wooden frame to dry. That work soon became unchallenging, so I went to work as a warehouseman (as if that was any more challenging). I was a member of a team that was sent to Parker to help unload commodities from a train earmarked for Poston. Noon time was lunch...rice balls and something else. It was always a surprise. Working hard, the food tasted good. Some dissatisfaction among the workers developed. I can't remember the details, but people began talking about a "strike". My thought was, that it would be stupid because we could be replaced easily. I also worked for a Camouflage Manufacturing Plant making camouflage netting for the U.S. Army. They were located just outside Camp II. I was told pointedly by a Block 208 resident that I was helping the U.S. war effort. I finally received a position as a firefighter in the Camp II Fire Department.

### Sugar Beets Contract

In early September of 1942, the Western Sugar Processing Co. came to Poston to recruit workers to harvest sugar beets in the fields of Preston, Idaho. Preston was located due north of Salt Lake City on the Utah-Idaho border. The company was going to pay \$1.10 per ton. Not knowing anything about sugar beets, I did not know if that was good wages or not. Some said that if we worked hard, we could make some money. Although my parents were opposed, I was determined to go and I did. About 30 from Poston Camps I, II, and III signed up. A truck transported us to Parker, Arizona, where we boarded a train. I recall the train stopped in Reno for a couple of hours. The more daring persons dashed over several railroad tracks to get to the casinos. The darkness of the night helped. I don't know how true it was, but some claimed they made some money. I thought that it was just bragging. One of the daring ones was Tom Takehara. To my young mind, I perceived him as tough. His younger brother, George, who was the same age as me was also with us. We arrived in Preston, Idaho near midnight the following day.

Upon arrival, the sugar company fed us roast beef, mashed potatoes, gravy, and boiled squash. Being so hungry, it was good. Five of us were assigned to a farm named John Shwartz. We moved to his farm which was about 18 miles from Preston. We were given a small bungalow for lodging. The team consisted of George Takehara, Tak Urokawa, Nob Matsumoto, Tadashi Kashiwamoto, and me. We did our own cooking and took a cold bath in a washtub. We ate about the same thing every day. I remember this led to an argument one morning. This person shouted, "Are we having this slop again?" and flung the dish across the room. Needless to say, he was very hungry by noon. I believe lunch was always a bologna sandwich. We looked forward to Saturday because we would quit a little early, take our washtub bath, and Mr. Shwartz would take us into town to a restaurant. I remember having pork chops, mashed potatoes, vegetables, and apple pie for dessert. Since then, apple pie has

always been my favorite. After dinner, Mr. Shwartz would treat us to a movie. On one occasions, we had to sit through "Lil Tokyo" to get to the main feature. The sinister Japanese, 5th column spies, and all were portrayed. Sunday was a day off. Mrs. Shwartz would bake a cake or an apple pie for us. They had a young son named John Jr. who was 14 years of age. He would work right along with us. The opening of school around that area was delayed until the sugar beet harvest season was over. The following summer, John Jr. drowned in a nearby reservoir.

We did not make the money that we thought we would. Due to the nation's war effort, fertilizer (used for the manufacture of high explosives) was in short supply and the farmers had to skimp in its application. The consequence was that the sugar beets were much smaller in size. After completing our contract in Preston, an opportunity arose to go to Marsing, Idaho where the sugar beets were said to be huge. Marsing was near the Nevada-Idaho border on the western side of the state. Since I did not make much money in Preston, I decided to give this a fling. The wiser people went back to Poston. Unfortunately, it was now December and the ground was frozen. It was a struggle to break the beets from the ground and to chop the frozen leaves off. It was a slow process. No money again. Plus, I accidentally whacked a frozen beet across a person's face, breaking his glasses. We were flinging beets onto a truck, facing each other. I did not realize we were getting so close to each other. His face was coming down as I was flinging the sugar beet up - wacko! That blow also knocked him out, I hoped that he was not seriously hurt. I was glad when he wiggled his hand. Although it was his fault as much as mine, I offered to pay for the cost of another pair of glasses. I cannot remember what the cost was. When I got back to Poston, I handed over what money I had left to my mother. It wasn't much!

### The Loyalty Questionnaire

When I returned to Block 208, Camp II, Poston, I noted the subdued mood of the residents. At issue was the question of serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. The National JACL President, Saburo Kido, had advocated and petitioned the U.S. government to allow Japanese Americans to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States. Mr. Kido resided in Block 211. Block 208 was a very radical group. Indeed, I would say some were pro-Japan. The radical group arranged a Quad-Block meeting (Blocks 207, 208, 209, and 211) where Mr. Kido was asked to explain his position. This happened before I returned from Idaho. Before Mr. Kido could explain, the meeting became rancorous. There were shouts of Ba-ka-ya-ro, ah-ho, etc. My father tried to defend Mr. Kido but was physically removed from the meeting. That explained why people were so cool to me.

I know that some of the people running around today were in the "radical" column. Many sat on the fence, not revealing where they stood with regard to their loyalty. Some even feigned that they were on the radical side, only to move out of Poston in the quiet of the night. For me, it was clearly a time to draw the line. I expected to live in the U.S., so I'd better be willing to serve in the Armed Forces. Besides, we were already cast with suspicion. We could remove that suspicion by serving in the Armed Forces. That was not a popular move in Block 208. A few nights later, a radical group broke into Mr. Kido's residence and did him bodily harm, which resulted in two days of hospitalization. Soon thereafter the Kidos were whisked out of Poston. I understand that security guards were also placed at our residence during the night. When I returned, I slept with a baseball bat next to my bed.

President Roosevelt, upon receiving the JACL petition and undoubtedly conferring with his cabinet and the War Department, issued the following statement, "Americanism is a matter of mind and heart, never has been and never will be a matter of race or

national origin". He should have thought of this statement when he issued Executive Order 9066 that put us all behind barbed wire. With that statement, our draft status was changed from 4C (Enemy Alien) to 1A (Subject to Draft). He allowed the formation of a special combat unit, which became known as the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and was activated on February 1, 1943. Volunteers were called from the Territory of Hawaii, from the eastern states, and from the ten internment camps scattered throughout the United States. The ones who already were in the Army were transferred to Camp Shelby where they became cadres for the unit. There were instant promotions for many. This also opened the door so that those who were qualified could serve in the Military Intelligence Service (MIS). Their duties were to translate documents, interrogate prisoners, intercept radio messages, and other Japanese language-related duties. This was a huge plus for the Army because intelligence gathering is a big part of any army operation and Japanese language experts were in short supply. This Executive Order also served the need for Japanese language experts.

Another challenge we faced was that we were all required to answer the Loyalty Questionnaire. It came basically to two questions. The first asked if you would pledge allegiance to the United States of America. The second asked whether or not you would be willing to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States. A "double Yes" answer meant volunteering into the just activated 442nd RCT or to the MIS. A "Yes/No" answer would declare loyalty but would not serve unless drafted. A "Double No" would be classified as disloyal. The purpose of this questionnaire was to segregate the loyal from the disloyal. The disloyal would be sent to Tule Lake for eventual repatriation to Japan. This whole process was eventually challenged in court and was overturned. A U.S. District Court stated that native born American citizens could not be labeled enemy aliens and could not be imprisoned or sent to Japan on the basis of this renunciation. This happened in June of 1947, too late for many who had already been repatriated via a neutral ship, Gripshom, from Sweden. My answer to the questionnaires was a "Double Yes". I did not agonize over that decision. Some of my friends, under the influence of the

radicals answered "Double No." They became known as the "No-No Boys." Upon learning that they would be shipped to Tule Lake and eventually to Japan, it was panic time. Some changed their answers. Some had to get a letter of reference from some person who knew them well. I wrote such a letter. I supposed the logic was that since I had volunteered, my word carried some weight. Many did not change their minds until they were shipped to Tule Lake and reality set in that indeed they would be shipped back to Japan. At that time, it was becoming apparent that Japan was about to lose the war.

I told my parents that I was going to volunteer. My father was concerned about the bad influence of the Army. But he noted some good people had already volunteered. The people that I knew were Harry Madokoro, Ray Matsushita, Hiroo Endo, George Yamamoto and Sam Ogawa. There were a couple of others who did not pass the physical. Now the question was, "When do we get called up?"

### **The Satow Family in Keenesburg, Colorado**

Poston was where the Riichi Satow family was incarcerated. The Satow family (nine children) stayed in Poston for approximately eight months.

In March of 1943, my father took the opportunity to move his family out to Keenesburg, Colorado as a "sharecropper" on a sugar beet farm. The go-between was Mr. Kodama who lived in Denver at that time. He had been our family friend for many years. He acted as a mediator between Mr. Jakel, the farmer, and my father. It was a momentous decision. It was a choice of staying in the safety of the camp or moving the family out to an unknown and yet a freer, albeit a harsher environment. He chose the latter because he thought this was better for his children. It turned out to be the right decision. The farmer was a good person. A good relationship developed between our two families. Once settled, my father summoned his

brother and his family (9 children, also) to Keenesburg. Times were tough, but they both did not have any regrets. They had some wonderful experiences and many stories to tell.

As for me, I had volunteered into the Army in February of 1943. I expected an induction notice any day, so I did not accompany the family to Keenesburg. However, after waiting about a month and not getting a notice of induction, I decided I needed to join the family in Keenesburg. In April I departed Poston Relocation Camp. Traveling on the same train were Larry Matsumoto, who was resettling in Chicago, Illinois and Takeo Toguchi, who was going to Denver, Colorado. Takeo was to join the Military Intelligence Service Unit soon after. As we boarded the train, we were given sack lunches, compliments of Poston Camp II. Larry soon had to change trains and in the confusion, we forgot to give him his sack lunch. Larry, to this day, reminds me of that incident. He said he went hungry because it took two more days to reach Chicago.

I did odd jobs for Mr. Jakel. He had me pretty busy driving the tractor and truck, bailing hay, etc. for 50 cents an hour. It was a wonderful experience. I remember harvesting wheat on a combine. I later saw a movie that told a story about a "Wheat Combine Crew" that worked from state to state. I thought to myself, "I did that." My induction notice finally arrived in mid June, ordering me to report to Fort Douglas, Utah. Mr. Jakel offered to get me a draft deferment as a "farm essential" but I refused. As a matter of fact he offered to increase my wages by five cents. The Satow and Jakel families soon became good friends. To be sure, the war changed our lives, but many good things happened. We can't dwell on the negatives.

### Camp Shelby, Mississippi

When I arrived at Fort Douglas, Utah, there were several other Niseis there from Poston, Arizona and Tule Lake, Ca. Since we were

inducted together, we went through basic training together. They were new sets of friends whom I became acquainted with. William Nakamura, from Seattle via Tule Lake, was "Killed in Action" early on Hill 140 in Italy. On his last furlough to Tule Lake he had gotten married. He had every reason to want to stay alive, but when the chips were down he did what he had to do. He got up and moved forward, eliminating a machine gun nest in the process. He was awarded the "Distinguished Service Cross" (DSC). His brother George was in my platoon. James Ura was from Denver. He was severely "Wounded in action" early in our campaign. He did not return to the front. While traveling from Salt Lake to Camp Shelby, Miss., I stopped over in Denver. Takeo Toguchi and I were invited to James Ura's home for dinner. We met his in-laws and sisters. We rode together on a train to Hattiesburg, Miss. and a bus took us to Camp Shelby.

I was assigned to "D" Company's, Heavy Weapons, 81mm mortar platoon. James Ura was assigned to "E" Rifle Company. The first twelve weeks was "Basic Training". My cousin Steve was one of the Cadre. He was in the Army when the 442nd RCT was activated. Just before the final "Regimental Maneuver" in February, most of us in the 1st Battalion was transferred to the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. I was transferred to "H" Company, another Heavy Weapons Company of the 2nd Battalion. We assumed that we would be going overseas soon. I, being the last arrival, was last in the "pecking order". My assignment was to lay telephone wires from our gun position to the Observation Post (OP). We trained through all phases of a mortar crew, and I was confident I could handle it. Our Regimental maneuver in conjunction with the 69th Div went exceedingly well and certified us ready for combat. In March, 1944, Army Chief of Staff, Gen. George Marshall reviewed the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

In April, we were on our way overseas. We were part of a convoy of 100 ships. We were on board a Liberty ship, not a big boat, so it creaked and groaned as the large waves slammed against the sides. It traveled at about 13 miles per hour and it took us 28 days to reach

Iran, North Africa. Many got seasick. I was in a quasi-sick condition. With all the vomiting, the smell was terrible. I tried to stay on deck whenever I could. I remember seeing the porpoises that swam alongside the boat. We were alerted about a possible U-boat attack but nothing happened. Our ship landed in Iran, Africa. The rest of the Unit sailed to Naples where they debarked and were bivouacked near a town called Bagnoli. After about five days. we were also on our way to Bagnoli. The 100th Infantry Battalion was allowed to retain its separate designation because of its outstanding record, but they became our 1st Battalion. Our 1st Battalion was left behind in Camp Shelby to train new inductees that would be the replacement for the 100th/442nd RCT.

An interesting story is how the "Liberty Torch" became our insignia. The War Department originally had designed a yellow hand holding a dagger to be our insignia. Everyone thought that was a bad choice. It smacked of a yellow hand ready to stab someone in the back. A Sgt. Miyamoto designed a substitute, which was the Liberty Torch and submitted it to the War Department for reconsideration, and it was adopted.

To give a better perspective on why some volunteered, here is the story of George Saito. He and his brother Calvin had volunteered from Amache Relocation Center. He grew up in Boyle Heights in east Los Angeles. After every campaign, he would go to "K" Company to seek his younger brother Calvin. After the campaign, before departing for France, Lt. Richard Hayashi of "K" Company informed George that his brother did not make the last campaign. He came back to "H" Company devastated but composed. Just before we entered the Battle of Bruyeres, he said to me, "Sus, you know, with the sacrifices that have been made and with the sacrifices yet to be made, this is going to allow Japanese Americans to be able to go back to their homes along the West Coast with dignity and with pride." He further stated, "Indeed Japanese Americans will one day be able to join the mainstream of American life." Looking back today, all of what he had prophesied has come to pass. Four days later, in the savage battle for Bruyeres, he became a "sacrifice yet

to be made." He was a young man of high principles. Looking over his statement, one can come to the conclusion that he gave his life for all of us. The good things that followed were: The Walter McCarran Act of 1952 that allowed our Issei parents to become citizens, the abolishment of the Alien Land Law, Statehood for Hawaii, Senators and Congressmen who have been elected, and the Apology and Redress signed into law by Presidents Reagan and Bush on the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Indeed the accomplishments and sacrifices of the 100th/442nd have changed the course of history for all of us.

### **First Day in Combat**

On the evening of June 25, 1944, the day before we were to go into combat, Colonel James Hanley, the Battalion Commander, gathered the entire Battalion to give us a pep talk. He stated that from the next day on, no blank shots were going to be fired at us. Everything would be for real. He bellowed, "We will move forward and not take one step backward." He said the reality was that many of us would not make it back to the states. We looked at each other because at that point, we did not know who might not make it back. We were standing next to a 155mm Long Tom. When it fired, it made a thunderous sound. Our section leader was a Lt. (name withheld). Everytime the Long Tom fired, he would jump. I wondered what kind of a leader we had.

The next morning, we awoke early. We were supposed to relieve the 36th Infantry Division. We were ordered to maintain contact with "G" Company, G was supposed to lead the attack. We were to provide the 81 mm mortar support. Holding the same position as I did during the maneuvers, I was still the wire-layer for our squad. I was the person who laid the telephone wires between our gun position and the observation post. The observer is usually an officer who directs the mortar fire. I was generally with the observer at the observation post (O.P.). As we went through the 36th Infantry

Division, the reality of war struck me. On the side of the road lay two young German soldiers, lifeless. One had been struck in the head because his blond hair was smeared with his blood. I remember thinking that I really had nothing against the Germans. We could easily have been friends. Why do we have to kill each other?

As we moved forward, our leader lost contact with G Company and at about the same time, gun fire and explosives began to be heard ahead. We thought that could be G Co. but soon an "F" Co. soldier appeared and told us that F Co. was trapped in a valley, surrounded by high ground on both sides. He reported that an 88mm artillery (an artillery weapon that we soon came to respect) from a German tank was firing point blank against them. We were sitting on our helmets under an oak tree, listening to what he had to say when suddenly a single shot from a sniper rang out. I swear that shot did not miss me by much. We all dove into the drainage ditch that was next to us. The drainage ditch had wild blackberries on one side so that we could not move in that direction. That was the direction from which the enemy sniper fire came. A German machine gun also opened fire. As much as we were told to support G Co., it was clear to us that the situation had changed. From that drainage ditch, we could not do much. Enemy fire forced us to keep our heads down. Our immediate Section leader (an officer whom I will not name) became disoriented and totally useless. Sgt. Harada was trapped behind a large oak tree in an open field. We could not stay trapped in this drainage ditch. We needed to do something.

Papoose Sadanaga, Blake Mitani, and I decided to crawl down the drainage ditch, and turn left into another branch ditch that led to a paved road. We would crawl through a culvert to get to the other side of the road. Every time our rump showed above the drainage line, the enemy would fire. We got to the other side of the road. We were now in a more advantageous position. In the meantime, our 100th Infantry Battalion was pulled out of reserve, and quickly moved between 2nd and 3rd Battalion positions, attacking the enemy from the side and rear. This relieved the pressure on "F" Co. and the small arm firing against us also stopped. What had happened was

the enemy who was attacking us had to make a hasty retreat or get caught in a trap. The 100th was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for that performance. They destroyed an entire SS battalion. Many bodies were counted, 20 wounded and 73 captured.. Trucks, tanks, jeeps, and heavy weapons were destroyed. The conduct of the officer in charge of our section was reported to our Company Commander, Captain Keegan. He was removed from our section. Someone later saw him in Rome. He probably had been given a rear echelon job.

### Crossing the Cecina River and Hill 140

After the first day of combat, the men of the 442nd became professionals. I was able to witness one incident and I was totally impressed. The Cecina River had to be crossed. The Germans had established a defensive line overlooking the river and anybody trying to cross it would be met by small arms and machine-gun fire. I had a clear view from behind clumps of cottonwood tree stumps overlooking the river. F Co. was to lead the attack. I was contemplating our 81 mm mortar support. However, the 60mm mortar squad attached to each company went into action. They spotted the first machine gun nest. Under the direction of a Squad Sergeant, the first mortar round was fired, which landed about 150 ft. [redacted] in back of the machine gun nest. The Sergeant gave the correction and ordered another round. This landed about 10 feet and slightly left of the nest. Small arms began to be fired from both sides. The Sergeant gave another correction and ordered three rounds, two of the rounds made a direct hit into the machine gun position.

After crossing the Cecina River on or about July 3rd, the Germans put up a defense line on what we dubbed Hill 140. The resistance was very fierce. The 100th Battalion, remembering the Cassino battle, called it "Little Cassino." Our 81mm mortar fired 1,200 rounds during this engagement. The barrel of our guns became very

hot. At this point we needed to be careful because the shell will fire prematurely before it hits the bottom of the barrel. Our gun position was also harassed by one enemy who was taking pot shots at us. Three of us decided to go after him. The area was thick with mesquite-like shrubbery. From behind the shrubbery, we approached his position. He opened up with a burst of rapid fire from a hand-held machine gun. I swear the branches on both sides of me broke as the bullets whizzed by. I thought I knew where the gunfire came from, so I threw a hand grenade toward the suspected area. The grenade bounced over a pile of firewood and made a muffled explosion. The firing stopped. About ten minutes later, we moved forward cautiously. No sign of the enemy could be found. He apparently departed, probably realizing that we were coming after him. The other person was Blah Yoshida (Blah is a nickname); the third person, I don't remember.

Hill 140 is where my good friend William Nakamura, was killed in action. Many decorations were awarded for the five day battle of Hill 140. One was to William Nakamura who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, posthumously. Most of us, when fired upon, sought cover. In William's case, he moved forward to meet the challenge. He neutralized a machine gun nest and was killed in that process. He dug his fingers in to the ground to try to stay alive. William had a new bride in Minidoka Internment Camp who was waiting for him.

### Livorno

On July 25th, after about a month of combat, the 100th/442nd was pulled back to a place called Vada for rest and recreation. Here we took a warm shower, shaved, and got a haircut from anyone who claimed to be a barber. I was one of the barbers. My nickname soon became "Butcher." One evening we were treated to a USO show featuring Jinx Falkenberg. She sang many Hawaiian songs and the final two were "Aloha Oei" and "Blue Hawaii." A pin drop could have

been heard as she sang the final song. Our casualties were beginning to mount so this was a poignant moment. The reality was that many would never see "Blue Hawaii" again. As I looked around, there were tears rolling down the cheeks of some of my comrades. The walk back to our bivouac area was a silent one.

After our "Rest and Recreation", our next campaign was to capture the port city of Livorno. The City of Luciano, a key town in the foothills east of Livorno, had to be captured before going into that city. The 3rd Battalion was the lead unit. Company K became heavily involved and Lt. Hayashi of Stockton played a significant role in that battle. I met him many years later in Stockton at a funeral for a former 442nd veteran. After the company commander was disabled, Lt. Hayashi took command and directed K Company's attack on Livorno. After two days of house to house fighting, Luciano fell. That left the Port city of Livorno wide open. The enemy immediately retreated. As for our 2nd Battalion, we were guarding the flank of the 3rd Battalion. Other than to guard against what might happen, our action was relatively light. We did fire some rounds at targets of opportunity. This was where my friend from Poston, Harry Madokoro, was killed in action. He was also a member of K Company. He was a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) man. They used to say that the life expectancy of a BAR man was zilch. He had blood made out of ice. He was much older than me so I looked up to him with respect. I also knew that he was the former Police Chief of Poston Camp II. But during Basic Training, he had to learn to crawl with a rifle the same as the rest of us, so I thought, "What the heck, he is no different than me." But truly I had a lot of respect for him. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for gallantry in action.

### The Pink House

We had established our gun position in a ravine behind a steep hill. I was told by Sgt. Koizumi to lay telephone wires beyond the hill to a

house on top of another hill. Sgt. Harada would be there. The instructions sounded hazy to me and I remember asking him if I might be walking into the enemy's hand. He said, "No! No! No!, but be careful." I didn't want to go directly over the hill because it was an open field and I would be too exposed. I decided to follow the ravine that slanted towards the left where there was more shrubbery. The ravine finally came to a point where it veered further to the left. Ahead and to the right, on top of a hill, was a pink house which I assumed was my destination. But to get to the house, I had to cross an open field. About half way up, dirt kicked up on the side some distance from me. I realized that I was being fired on although I did not hear the gun fire. Nevertheless, I ran up the hill and dove through the door. The Pink House was an ideal location for an Observation Post (OP). Soon Cannon Company and Artillery observers were with us. Headquarters also was located there. The enemy noticed this and began to direct their big guns on the Pink House. I felt relatively safe inside the building until a shell came through an opening on a torn roof and landed against a wall on the stairway. Two were instantly killed, Captain Keegan's uniform and the side of his face was splattered with someone else's flesh. Another shell had hit the side of the wall where Sgt. Harada was located. He suffered a severe concussion. He appeared OK, but was very incoherent. Later when there was need for mortar support, Sgt. Harada was still groggy, so I directed the mortar fire. Our artillery and Cannon Co. also participated. We were able to stop an enemy counterattack.

I used to think that Sgt. Harada never did recover from that concussion. He had an interesting story to tell. He was 35 years of age when he volunteered. He told me that the reason he volunteered was because his brother was the one who helped a downed Japanese pilot during the attack on Pearl Harbor. The two subsequently were killed by a Hawaiian. This story was headlined in the newspapers and in Reader's Digest. He felt his family's name had to be avenged. I used to be his pup tent partner so that is where he shared this story with me. He was also an exercise nut. He would be up early in the morning doing push-ups. He was counting up to 65 and more. One

has to be in top physical shape to do that many push-ups.

John Yamamoto was a person I befriended when I was transferred to "H" Co. When I heard that he was from Poston Camp III, I made a special attempt to talk to him. We soon became friends. One morning, he and I were situated together on a hill. I believe that this was after the Pink House. Our Hawaiian comrade dubbed this the "Pu-pu-le Hill" because almost the entire 2nd Battalion was situated on that hill at the same time. John's and my trench were dug about five feet apart. A haystack was in back and to the left of my position. We were under constant artillery barrage. As we were exchanging views that sooner or later a shell was going to land close, it did. The shell landed directly in the trench that John was occupying. The haystack next to our trenches was covered with John's blood and pieces of his flesh. At first I thought I had a concussion and the red spots were a result of that concussion. I tried to blink them out of my vision, but they did not disappear. By then, someone down the hill was hollering that there was flesh around him. I looked over to John's trench. The shell had made a direct hit into his trench and only pieces of him remained. A first aid man already was out looking for someone who might be injured. I told him that John was already gone and he retreated back to the safety of his trench.

### **Close Call**

One night we received word that our machine gun platoon was getting short on ammunition and "K" rations. Our mortar platoon was ordered to carry some supplies to them. The night was dark and seven of us were picked to make this journey. We were instructed to go through an open field until we come to a road, then turn left and not too far would be a "Y" in the road. Following the right side of the "Y" a few hundred yards, the machine gunners would be waiting. The problem started when in crossing the open field, we unwittingly veered to the left. The consequence was that we ended up left of the

"Y", but we did not know this. The person in front of me leading the pack was another Sato. Each person's responsibility was to keep the person in front of him in sight. As we walked the road, I was beginning to think that we were traveling too far. Soon we noticed some people sleeping on the side of the road. Then Sato moved off the road toward a person sitting on a stump. I presumed that he wanted to inquire about our destination. He then moved back on the road and came toward me. He put his finger to his mouth to indicate silence and motioned for us to turn back. When we were safely away, he said the person on the stump had a German shaped helmet. We were lucky. We surmised that the German sentry was asleep in a sitting position and we hurriedly retreated. I was glad that it was Sato leading the pack. He was a quiet person who spoke only when necessary. If it were me, I might have blurted out something, awaking the sentry. We finally came to the "Y" that we were looking for. We took the right turn and soon found our machine gun platoon. We told them of our encounter, basically to let them know where the enemy was located. We hurriedly departed back to our unit.

### Appendicitis

I can't remember the exact time when this occurred but I think it was in early August and during a Rest and Recreation period. While strolling on a Mediterranean beach, I developed severe stomach pains. Checking into the Field Hospital, I was diagnosed with acute appendicitis. On the operating table I was given a spinal anesthetic. I was aware of all that was happening. Later I was told that this method was still very much experimental and permanent paralysis could occur, which was very disconcerting to me. About the third day after the operation, I was moved to a convalescent hospital. Every bump on the road sent a shock wave of pain to my stomach. But in a couple of weeks, I was back to normal. While at the convalescent hospital, I met a professional baseball pitcher, although I can't remember his name. He was looking for someone to catch for him, but nobody wanted to because he threw hard. I said,

"Yeah, Okay." We made a plate out of cardboard because he wanted to hit the corner knee high. I wanted to get an idea of how hard a major leaguer threw and I found that he threw very hard and had incredible control. I was impressed. He said that in certain conditions, a knee high outside corner pitch can momentarily freeze a batter. After some convalescent time, I soon found myself back in Company H. They were preparing to return to the front.

### Pisa, Florence, Arno River

Historians have written that the 100th Battalion was in the Pisa sector, but I can recall walking through a cantaloupe patch not far from the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Some helped themselves to the cantaloupes. The helpless farmer waved his arms and shouted in protest, but to no avail. I did not have the guts to take what was not mine. We soon came upon the Leaning Tower of Pisa. I marveled at the sight because I remembered reading in a history book about Galileo dropping a 10 pound and a 1 pound object from the Leaning Tower of Pisa to prove they both dropped at the same rate, disproving the theory that a heavier object drops faster than a lighter one. After that, we were trucked to the Florence area (approximately the waistline of Italy) where we took a position south of the Arno River. Our gun position was next to the vineyard. The wine grapes were just turning color. This was in the latter part of August. A couple of farmhouses stood in back of us. A young lady, a daughter, from one of the houses came to talk to us. She thought that the "stars" on the U.S. tank represented Russia's loan to the U.S. Italian partisans were communistic and received this propaganda from Russia. It appeared that she was flirtatiously trying to get to know us.

Fortunately for some of us, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions crossed the Arno River the following morning and we followed. Soon after, we were pulled back and sent to Naples. It appeared that we were destined to be sent to another front. Since our Anti-Tank Company

was in France already, we concluded that France would be our logical destination.

In Naples, we were met by new replacements from the United States; 672 is the figure given. I surmised that we had to have had that many casualties. This put us back to full strength. These men had to be trained and integrated into the unit. Among them were my cousin, Steve Sato; my neighbor, Kengo Abe; Torao Hayashi from Perkins; and from Florin, Cooper Tahara. James Ogawa and I met them as they trucked in at about 10:00 PM. The following day, Kengo, Steve, James and I visited Naples where we had a good time. On our visit to Naples, an interesting episode occurred. Upon arrival, we agreed that if we should get separated, we will meet at a newly-opened restaurant at 5:00 p.m. James Ogawa, whom we know as "Mako" (short for Makoto) became separated from us. He related the following story: A little girl was following him and when he discarded his cigarette, she pounced on it, broke it up and put the tobacco in a coffee can. Upon questioning her, she said that at the end of the day, she gives what was collected to a man who pays her some 'lira' so that she can buy food for herself and her younger brother. She and her brother live under a stairway of a bombed-out building. James invited her to join us for dinner. She immediately said, "o.k., but please wait." She ran off and in a few minutes returned with her brother who was also collecting cigarette butts on the other part of town. We were already seated at the restaurant when they arrived. James explained the situation. The six of us enjoyed a good spaghetti dinner. We told the little girl (about 10 years of age) to seek a women in black uniform (Nun) and ask her for help. James and I were the only ones who had any lira so we emptied our pockets and gave what we had to her. I have always had respect for James and this reinforced my feelings about him.

On September 27th, we boarded a large landing craft and set sail for Marseilles, France. That was the last time that I would see Kengo, for he was killed in action on the first week of combat in Bruyeres, France. Cooper Tahara and Torao Hayashi, both replacements, were also killed in action.

### Bruyeres, France

France was vastly different from the terrain of Italy. Italy was hilly and open terrain. The Bruxeres area was hilly and full of evergreen pine forests. At night, it was so dark that one could not see his hands in front of him. It was mid-October and the rain was cold and constant. Soon many of the troops developed "trench foot." It was common to see people hobbling about but not going to the hospital. For some, it was a good excuse to get out and some did. I did not want to be referred to as chickening out, and for many, they did not want to leave the burden to someone else.

The forest was devastating because shells would hit a tree and send shrapnel showering down on us. That is how Chester Kengo Abe, my boyhood neighbor, and George Saito, a comrade, were cut down. Chester was a replacement who had just come in. He was told to put some logs over his slit-trench, but he had replied, "When your time is up, your time is up." A tree burst sent a large shrapnel down, hitting the small of Chester's back.

George Saito was a friend who was in my platoon. As his squad was moving ahead, they came under artillery attack. The barrage was aimed at a road junction and the squad happened to be crossing the junction when the artillery barrage came in. A large shrapnel hit the side of his face, killing him instantly. Also sad is the fact that he had lost his younger brother, Calvin, in the last Italian Campaign. Both brothers definitely had a purpose when they volunteered for the 442nd Combat Team.

My job still was to lay telephone wires between our gun position and the Observation Post (OP). Replacements had come in and could have taken my place. One in particular whom I remember was a 32 year old man. He had two children at home and he was scared, especially about going into the unknown by himself. I thought if something

happened to him, that would be a heavy burden for me to carry in life. Japanese tales of "ko-shi-ga-nu-ke-ru" applied to him. So I said, "I'll do it." At that particular moment, I was at our gun position. Sergeant Sloppy Koizumi (I don't know why he was nicknamed Sloppy because he was meticulous) informed me that he had lost contact with Lt. Gliecher who was at the O.P. It was my job to check out the telephone line that I had laid previously. I had to hurry because it was late in the afternoon. Deep into the forest I went. I soon came across eight Caucasian GIs on patrol. I had my Tommy Gun with my finger on the trigger. I told them that they were way out of their territory. The lead man, a Lieutenant, answered that they were on patrol to check the security of the left flank. I assured them that it was secure. After an exchange of pleasantries, they departed and I continued on. I soon found the broken wire. It appeared as if it were cut. I spliced it together and contact once again was made on both ends. It was getting dark and I had to hurry. I kept thinking of the GIs whom I had met. They all had clean uniforms. The leader, who was a Lieutenant, was the only one who spoke and spoke in clean English with no slang. I wondered why that was. And thinking further, no friendly force was supposed to be on our right flank. I wondered if I had had a close call. I was glad that I did not get suspicious of their presence then because I could have panicked and taken drastic actions. Sgt. Koizumi was waiting for me. It was dark when I got back.

The following morning, I was at the O.P. with Lt. Gliecher, overlooking the town of Bruyeres. From that high vantage point, we could see down the main street to the other end of town. From behind one building, we could see the barrel of a (88mm.) German Tiger Tank, extending our beyond the protection of the wall. Our 3rd Battalion had captured the hill on the left of Bruyeres. I dug a slit trench for the two of us. I put a cardboard and logs on top and added some soil for good measure. Our O.P. position was very obvious. Much shelling took place. Several shells hit the trees above us, raining shrapnels to the ground. The cover over our trench was a "saving grace," for we could hear the thumps of shrapnels as they hit our cover. Our own artillery also was skimming just above the tree

line to hit targets in Bruyeres. Some fell short and into our position.

The following morning, the barrel of the tank was no longer visible. Apparently the enemy had withdrawn during the night. We cautiously moved forward. I remember seeing PFC Takei of the 100th going door to door. This made me realize that we were premature in being there. We stopped to make sure that the riflemen were ahead of us. We went through the town and soon climbed the hills beyond the town. We finally took refuge behind a cove cut into the hillside right behind the front line. Our machine gun squad was scurrying about so I surmised that we were at the front. A barrage of artillery shells came our way. Several hit the trees nearby. As I was diving to the ground, a shrapnel hit me in the back. It felt like a ton of bricks had fallen on me. Fortunately, the shrapnel had hit my shovel handle before penetrating my overcoat. My heavy winter clothing also impeded the shrapnel. I learned that Lt. Gliescher was seriously hit on the side of his cheek. He was more worried about me than about himself. He was definitely a stretcher case. He made sure that the photo of his girlfriend (whom he married after the war) was in his possession. I asked someone to check my back. I was concerned because it felt warm. I thought it might be my blood, but it turned out to be the warmth of the shrapnel. He said, "You're lucky. It broke your shovel handle." I was what we called a "walking wound." There were five of us.

As we were walking back, we came to the juncture of a walkway and we needed to make a decision. The majority wanted to go to the right. I insisted that was the wrong way. Finally, Turk Tokita from Kauai agreed with me. My opinion prevailed and so we correctly ended up at our First Aid Station. The stretcher with Lt. Gliescher however, took the wrong juncture and ended up being captured by the enemy. Lt. Gliescher spent the duration as a "prisoner of war" in Germany. The four carriers also were captured. One was a friend, Sadao Tachibana, from the island of Kauai.

I was evacuated to the Field Hospital where I was treated. I was held there for four days mainly to ensure that no infection started.

During that time, I witnessed a sudden influx of wounded from the 100th/442nd coming into the hospital. They were from the "Rescue of the Lost Battalion." Our platoon also took quite a hit. Lt. Farnham, Sgt. Kuroda, and PFC Shigemura from our platoon were killed in action. There were many who were wounded. The entire Regiment had 200 killed in action on that operation alone. Chester Abe, Cooper Tahara, Torao Hayashi, Lester Murakami, all from Sacramento, were KIAs in the Battle of Bruyeres and the Rescue of the Lost Battalion.

I was transferred to a Convalescent Hospital after about four days. It was a resort town outside of Epinal with hot spring facilities. How good that was. There I met Art Miyao of Florin and a person from Taisho-ku, whose name I can't recall. Ray "Ham" Matsushita was there also. He had volunteered from Poston at the same time as I. He had a bullet wound on the calf of his leg. He related to me some of his harrowing experiences as a First Scout in a rifle squad. He had the ability to tell his story in a dramatic way. I returned back to "H" Co. in time to go to Southern France with the unit.

### **Champagne Campaign Gothic Line and the Final Push**

The Battle of Bruyeres and the Rescue of the Lost Battalion in France decimated our strength. To become an effective fighting unit again, we needed replacements to fill in the missing ranks. A process of retraining had to be made. In the meantime, the unit was sent to Southern France to guard the Italian-French border. This was the foothill of the Alps. Although this was a stationary front, occasional gunfires were exchanged and casualties occurred. Some of the units had to be supplied by mules through a narrow mountain pass. Sometimes the mules would decide not to budge. The mules had a better sense of danger than we did. It really was telling us that they didn't want to go through the narrow pathway and risk tumbling to the bottom. For that is what happened on one occasion.

A shell exploded nearby, frightening the animal and causing it to loose its footing and causing the animal to stumble and fall all the way to the bottom. I was glad when our section was reassigned to guard from a fort, a place called Sospel. This was part of the Maginot line that separated France from the potential enemy from the east. For a stationary front, such as we had, this was good. For some of us who were suffering trench foot, this gave us time to rub our feet to keep them dry and warm. The entire operation became known as the "Champagne Campaign." Liberal passes were given to Nice. Our unit had a "Rest and Recreation Hotel" setup for this purpose. The Champagne Campaign came to a close in early March and preparation to move got underway.

Rumors floated about as to where we might be going. Someone started a rumor that we were going to Southeast Asia, Burma, Thailand, maybe the Philippines, creating excitement. Remember, we were all young men then. Our destination was classified "Top Secret" but when we boarded a "Landing Craft," even though it was a large one, we recognized that we couldn't be going too far. We soon found ourselves back in Italy to an area just north of the "Leaning Tower of Pisa." This was an area we had wrestled from the Germans just before our departure for France the year before. The front line had been stagnant since our departure. The enemy had plenty of time to fortify their positions.

This was the Gothic Line. The line was along the Appennines Mountain which ran along the western front north of Pisa and Lucca. I remember looking north into the Appennines Mountain and thinking we are going to have to fight our way through that? What an impossible task! The words that we received were that the fortification overlooked all approaches and had an interlocking crossfire that would be deadly to any approaching enemy. The order to the 100th/442nd was to break this Gothic line. Our presence was dubbed "Top Secret", but the 5th Army Commander, General Mark Clark, made a high profile visit presenting decorations, talking to our commanders, etc. and Axis Sally had already broadcast our presence in Italy. It appeared to be not much of a secret operation.

The speculation among the troops was that the exposure of our presence was deliberate so that the enemy would shift their reserves to our western front. The 5th Army's plan was that the main attack would be in the central front, through Bologna, and that the 100th/442nd would be a diversionary one. This speculation was correct. Soldiers at our level were not to question but to follow orders. However, the plan did not work according to how the high command had foreseen. The 100th/442nd broke through the Gothic Line and moved up the coast to Genoa, and broke into Po Valley so quickly, while the rest of the 5th Army was still fighting in and around Bologna.

The Gothic Line was broken in the following manner. The mountain bastion rose to a height of a little over 3,000 feet. The plan of attack was to move up on the back side of the mountain under cover of darkness and be in position to make an early morning attack. The 3rd Battalion's objective was Mt. Fogorito, the main German defense line. The 2nd Battalion was to move on to Mt. Belverdere, slightly left of and slightly higher than Mt. Fogorito, probably the secondary line. The 100th was on the western slope to attack Mt. Cerretta in the early morning. As we got ready to make the climb, we were told not to make any noise. Silence was of paramount importance. Stay in close contact with the person in front. And so, in the darkness we did climb. The mountainside was steep and treacherous. We had to make sure we did not slip, because we did not know how far we would fall. It is said that one young man did fall. All that was heard was a thump and a low groan at the bottom. He did not yell out. As the morning dawn approached, I looked back and recognized how much we had climbed and how steep the mountain was. My thought was, this would not be a place to get wounded because the evacuation would be difficult. When the action began, we made one attempt to evacuate a person on a stretcher. I was one of the carriers. We tried to keep the stretcher as level as we could. The two up front had to hold their end high and the back had to hold it low. About 50 yards from the first aid station the patient's tongue started to hang. He was still alive and we double-timed to the station. The medics immediately went to work on him. I do not

know who he was. To this day, I just hope he made it. I picked up some 88mm mortar shells, some K ration, and immediately went back up the mountain.

Getting back to the early morning, the 100th and the 3rd Battalion made their pre-dawn surprise attack. The 2nd Battalion moved on up the mountain to Mt. Belverdere where a fierce fight developed. The enemy defended fiercely but in about 30 minutes all objectives were secured. The reason the enemy succumbed so quickly was that they did not expect anybody or any fool to come up the back of the steep mountainside. Their defense was geared to a frontal attack. There were casualties suffered by all three battalions. Here is where PFC Sadao Munemori's heroic acts earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor, posthumously. He was a member of "A" Company of the 100th Battalion. After an initial attempt to evacuate the wounded by stretcher, it was decided that they will be held on the mountaintop until a road could be cleared. This will allow a jeep to transport the wounded. The Gothic Line was thus broken.

My friend Sam Kitagawa, from Sacramento, and his squad forced a German tank crew to surrender near the town of Massa. I don't remember any awards given. But that happens in combat sometimes. Events happen and we move on. No time for documentation or braggadocio. After more hard-fought battles, Massa was taken, then quickly to Carrera (Carrera marble quarry). La Spezia, the naval base, was soon overrun. This base was a thorn on our sides because here is where the long range artillery shells were coming from. By then the Germans were starting to surrender. Young lads, 14, 15 years of age, crying, came down from the mountainside with their hands raised. I was glad because the war was now over for them. We sensed that the war was now almost over for everyone. We all were conscious to not be the last "killed in action." I removed the grenade that I normally carry on my chest because I did not want the safety pin, to accidentally come off. In one of the villages we overran, I witnessed man's inhumanity to man. The Italian partisans had cornered a burgermeister of the town still in city hall. He was crying for mercy. The partisans proceeded to smash his head with a

rifle butt, smash his fingers as he lay semi-conscious on the table. A GI from an armored tank division and I tried to intercede. A partisan who spoke some English told us that we should leave for our own safety, because we would not be able to stop it. Next morning, from across the street, I witnessed several partisans dragging his body, feet first, down the stairway of city hall. His head bounced as he came down each step. They buried him outside of the town along the roadway.

Back to the subject of the offensive. We made a dash to Genoa. In Genoa, a man could not understand what he was seeing. Japanese, how could that be, he asked? He began to question us and we told him that there are many Italian Americans as well. We then headed east, over the mountain into Po Valley. As we entered one village, children and townspeople came out to welcome us. One youngster, thinking he was doing the right thing, gave us the Mussolini salute. The mother was frantically trying to correct him and apologized to us. No apology needed, we thought that it was humorous. We entered Milan and one of the units made a dash to Turin. The rest of the 5th Army broke through Bologna and went on to Venice. I think that the secret desire of any commander was to break through into Po Valley and be the first to enter Milan and/or Turin. Our 100th Battalion once had the experience of about to enter Rome, when they were ordered to stop. Another Caucasian unit received credit for being the first to enter Rome.

As we were about to enter Milan, I was detached from "H" Company and joined seven other members of the 442nd to form a special Honor Guard in case of a ceremonial gathering of dignitaries to mark the end of hostilities in Italy. We were housed in a hotel next to the Dome. This is known as the (Duomo of Milan) and is Europe's third largest church. We received special treatment - we ate well. We were issued new uniforms and we polished our shoes. We were ordered to get a haircut. One day near a street stop, an Italian man approached us and asked us to follow him. We boarded a streetcar and rode quite a distance into the suburb. We finally got off, walked a few blocks to a nice apartment complex. There we were met by a

Japanese lady. Her name was Toshiko Hasegawa. She told us that she grew up in Stockton, California. She was an opera singer and she performed at one of the famous opera houses in Milan. I told her that I was from Sacramento. I told her about the internment and the Japanese American combat unit. She also said she had the Japanese embassy people over for the final dinner two nights ago. They left lots of Japanese goodies with her. She said that she would prepare a dinner for us one day, and she did. This good living lasted about a week. The ceremony did not materialize and we were sent back to our units.

So the war ended for us. I think in those days, we were tough both emotionally and physically. After each campaign, we would attend a service for our fallen comrades, then move on to the next campaign. After the first day in action, I thought my odds were slim. I had some close calls. We really did not know what fate awaited us.

### Post War Period

May 2, 1945, the war in Italy was over. A few days later, the war in Europe was officially over. The war against Japan was still continuing. About 200 of our men who had sufficient knowledge of the Japanese language volunteered for duty in the Pacific. As for me, my duty as Honor Guard representing the 442nd came to an end. I went back to "H" Company which was bivouacked in Ghedi Airport near the town of Brescia. This was a resort town located in the foothills of the Alps. It was "Rest and Recreation" time for us, but we also had duties in processing the prisoners and guarding the compound. I remember one incident when I was processing a Colonel of the German Army. We were ordered to confiscate all contrabands; cameras were considered a contraband. I confiscated a very expensive "Leica" camera, but I had second thoughts (conscious) about keeping it as my possession. So I left it on the side to decide what to do with it later. A Lieutenant (Nisei) who was in charge saw the camera and absconded it while I was busy with the

prisoners. The nerve of him, he was bragging to others that he had confiscated it from a German officer. I guess, rank has its privileges.

For recreation, I tried out and made the Regimental baseball team. We played against teams from other units around the area and we were very competitive. However, I did not get the playing time that I wanted. I would guess that in the eyes of the manager, I was not good enough. But when our centerfielder went 0 for 24, I thought that he should have been replaced and that replacement should have been me, but that never happened. In the fall of 1945, a football team was formed. I did not participate. In football, size counts. We were overmatched. As an example, the average weight of the 92nd Division teams was about 200 pounds. The razzle-dazzle type of play that we used did not always work. The opponent's massive weight kept pushing our line back.

We were also starting to anticipate as to when we would be going home. A point system was established to determine the order in which we would go. Longevity of service, including combat time, decorations, were all a part of the scoring system. I believe that I ended up with 71 points, which put me on the large second group of soldiers that would be leaving. I departed Italy the early part of November 1945. Our group boarded an 18,000 ton luxury liner which was converted to a troop carrier. Our trip to New Jersey was fairly comfortable. We stayed at Camp Kilmer for a few days, then boarded a C-47 for Camp Beale, Calif. via Dallas, Texas. One of the C-47 crashed on the approach to Camp Beale. George Arima and I went to the Auburn Military Hospital to visit the survivors of the crash. They were Raymond Tanaka and Nick Shimazu. A couple of years later, Nick lost his life in the great tidal wave that hit the beach of Hilo, Hawaii.

George Arima and I received our Discharge from the Army at Camp Beale, CA. Japanese Americans were starting to come back from the Internment Camps where they were detained during the course of the war. Hostels were set up at the Buddhist Church where we stayed a

few nights. We visited my Uncle and Aunt's farm where they had returned recently. I visited my then girlfriend, Lily Higuchi. I didn't waste any time. I proposed and we made plans for the future. From Sacramento, I went to Keenesburg, Colorado, where my parents were still farming. Their aspiration was to return to California. I went on to Chicago, Illinois and found employment as supply clerk at a company called the "Advertisement Medal Display" company. I married Lily Higuchi on July 20, 1946. We recently celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Here I am at age 73. As I look back, the most tumultuous time of most Nisei life must have been during the World War II era. That is why I write this memoir. In spite of the injustices suffered, the majority of the Japanese Americans responded in a manner which can only bring credit to the Japanese American community. The accomplishments of the 100th Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team with the support of the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion and the 232 Engineers are legendary. The Military Intelligence Service Unit that operated under top secret classification added tremendously to the final victory in the Pacific. Indeed they have changed the course of history not only for the Japanese Americans, but for the entire nation as well. I think it made America recognize that this is a country of diverse backgrounds. Discriminatory laws have been abolished, Statehood for Hawaii, Governors, Senators, Congressmen, and mayors elected, apology and redress all came about because of the Nisei/Kibei accomplishments in the military. I think our parents would have said, "Yo-ku-yat-ta!" (a job well done).

### **Poston Monument/Kiosk**

The former residents of Poston Internment Camp, Arizona, living in Sacramento had decided to build a monument at the Poston site as a marker to indicate to the future generations what had happened to the Japanese Americans during World War II. A call for volunteers was made to assist in this project. Mr. George Oki was the chairman of this project. The construction of the monument was under the leadership of Mr. Ted Kobata. He has many years of experience as a building contractor. I was one of nine persons who volunteered to help in this project.

We arrived in Poston, Arizona in mid July. It was hot, hot. Jim Namba developed heat rash and was very uncomfortable; baby powder and other remedies did not help. To beat the heat, we decided to go to work at 3:00 A.M. and quit about noon, but that plan went awry, because there were mountains of work that needed to be done. We continued working until near sundown. I also cooked for the crew. People said nice things, but little did they know that I did not have that kind of experience as a cook.

Over a thousand people attended the Dedication Service of the monument in October 1992.

Several years later a kiosk was constructed which gave more information about the camps. The project was completed in June of 1995.

### **Heart Mountain Barrack**

As a result of the war with Japan during World War II, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066. The Japanese Americans living along the west coast (California, Oregon, State of Washington,

and Arizona), citizens or not, were ordered interned in ten (10) relocation camps scattered throughout the United States. For the 120,000 Japanese Americans living along these western states, our homes were behind "barbed wire," in hastily built barracks for the duration of the war. The Satow family was incarcerated in Poston Relocation Camp located not far from the Colorado River in the State of Arizona. All this is now history.

Fifty years later, two half barracks were found essentially intact near Powell, Wyoming, where the Heart Mountain Relocation Center was once located. The Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in their wisdom, decided in 1994 to retrieve the two barracks and save them for historical purposes. An agreement with the two farmers in possession of the barracks was reached and plans were made to dismantle and retrieve the barracks. I learned of JANM's decision through their quarterly magazine publication. It asked for volunteers to travel to Powell, Wyoming in late September to assist with this project. I received a call from Mr. Ted Kobata, a local building contractor. He asked if I would be part of his team to assist in this project. I said, sure. The other person on this team was Mr. Sid Arase. He is a man of considerable talent, especially in the line of carpentry. With these two talents, I felt that I could be a helper. Ted has an interesting story to tell. He became involved in this project because Joanne Iritani of the Florin JACL had called him to inform him about this project and the need for experienced hands. His belief is that we need to preserve the history of the Japanese American experience during World War II so that future generations of our people will recognize their earlier history. Restoration of the barracks in Japanese American National Museum will add to that legacy. Therefore, we decided to lend our hands to this project. We notified JANM of our intent. From the stockpile of Ted's carpentry equipment, we assembled all the necessary tools and parts we envisioned we might need and stacked them into a trailer. This was towed by Ted's large R.V.

We departed on Saturday, September 23, 1994. Going through Nevada turned to be lucky for some. Ted hit a jackpot worth \$1,500. That

was the last dollar he had put into the machine before we were to depart. We visited the former site of Minidoka Relocation Center. A monument erected by JACL remains as a silent reminder of the hustle and bustle that existed there 50 years ago. On the monument were the names of 73 young men who were "killed in action" while serving in the 442nd RCT and other units of the armed forces of the United States. Many were comrades that I had served with while a member of the 442nd RCT. For me, it was a solemn moment. It brought back memories of the distant past, when these young men were alive and full of promises. We stopped in Pocatello with the hope of visiting a person who had lived in Mayhew (our home area) and attended the same grammar school prior to World War II. We weren't able to make contact. On to Yellowstone National Park - this was my first visit and it was very interesting. We remained overnight at a campsite. The following noon, Monday, we arrived in Powell, Wyoming. We visited the motel where Nancy Araki (project director) and James Hall (engineer in charge) were headquartered. Much of what had to be accomplished and the method were discussed. The following morning, we went to work. Diane Suzuki of Sacramento had also traveled to Cody, Wyoming to help with this project. She is a dedicated Sansei who gets involved in things she believes in. And indeed she worked hard.

The first barrack that we dismantled was from Mr. Ogawa's farm. This barrack will be rebuilt inside the museum, in an adjacent building that the Japanese American National Museum is planning to build. Mr. Ogawa has an interesting background. He grew up in Idaho Falls, Idaho and was not subjected to internment during the war. Shortly after the end of the war, the area around Heart Mountain Relocation Camp was opened for bid under the Homesteading Act. Mr. Ogawa, then a young man, put his bid in and was awarded a 50 acre track. He related that his first home was this barrack. Bitterly cold during the winter. Not married then, he struggled for 5 years, before expanding. Today, he is one of the more successful and big time farmers in that area. He and his wife, Emi, came to help everyday. His tractor and truck were made available to us. He was most generous. The barrack was dismantled piece by piece. Each piece

was identified for easier reassembly. There were 50 years of accumulation of dust, so that by day's end, (when it got too dark to work) we were covered from head to toe with dust, including our young lady, Diane. Two unexpected volunteers came to help. A Caucasian couple traveling west on a leisurely vacation came upon our project. They were from Fort Lauderdale, Florida (Susan and Austin Gerchen). Upon learning about the background and story behind this project, they decided to stay and help. I later sent the couple a book, "Ten Visits" authored by Frank and Joanne Iritani, in appreciation. About 30 people from Denver, Seattle, Sacramento, San Jose, Los Angeles, and San Diego came as volunteers. Surprisingly to me were the newspaper reporters that converged on the scene. Television coverage from CNN, CBS and NHK of Japan. A two and one-half hour documentary was made by NHK to be viewed in Japan.

The tools and equipment that Ted Kobata envisioned we would need came in handy and in fact, saved the day. By the time the professional carpenters from Los Angeles arrived, we were beyond the middle of this project. We completed the project in time because cold weather and snow followed soon thereafter. Incidentally, I was the cook for the three of us.

We re-constructed the barrack adjacent to the JANM site. We put the pieces back together according to the label. Mr. Ogawa's barrack was put in storage until the new museum is built. It will show the inside of a typical barrack. When one works hard, the noon lunch tastes so good. Lady volunteers came out to prepare and serve the food. The lunches were superb! We had many visitors that came and watched us as we worked. It was a wonderful experience for me!

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF BRUYERES, FRANCE  
OCTOBER 15 AND 16, 1994

Fifty years have passed since the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team fought in Italy and France during World War II. Some of the fiercest fighting that the 100th/442nd were engaged in was the liberation of the towns of Bruyeres and Biffontaine, and in the rescue of the "Lost Battalion" in the Vosges Mountain of France. These battles were fought in the fall and early winter of 1944.

The 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team was a segregated, all Japanese American unit. The original members were volunteers from the Territory of Hawaii and from the ten internment camps scattered throughout the United States. The forced internment purportedly occurred because Japanese Americans could not be trusted. The young men of the 100th/442nd knew better! With that background, they fought hard; the casualties were high, but many victories were won. The supporting units consisted of the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, 232nd Engineer Company, Cannon Company, Anti-Tank Company and the 206th Army Ground Force Band.

The 50th Anniversary of the liberation of the towns of Bruyeres and Biffontaine was celebrated by the local people of France and they invited veterans and their wives from the United States. This took place on October 15 and 16, 1994. The 100th/442nd veterans were warmly welcomed by the people of Bruyeres, Biffontaine and the people of the Vosges Mountain area. Many members of the Veterans of Foreign War from the various Nisei VFW Post made the pilgrimage. Memorial services were held at the Borne 6 Monument in Biffontaine (Lost Battalion Monument, see footnote), the American Military Cemetery in Epinal, Place du Souvenir in Bruyeres, and the 100th/442nd Monument in Bruyeres. There is an interesting story about a S/Sgt Tomosu Hirata. He was the first to be killed in action in the liberation of Bruyeres. After the war, when bodies were being shipped back to their homes throughout the United States for reburial, the people of Bruyeres wanted to keep one grave in Epinal in memory of the Japanese Americans killed in action that freed their town. They made a special request to the family of S/Sgt Tomosu Hirata to leave him buried in Epinal. After much soul searching, the family decided to honor that request because of its high and honorable meaning. Today, his grave is carefully tended by the people of Bruyeres. Wreaths were presented by the 100th/442nd Veterans group as well as representatives of local organizations. A U. S. Military Band from Germany, squad from the French Military Color Guard and local veterans group added to the color of the ceremony. During the war years of 1944, the people of that area assisted in caring for the wounded. Many lasting friendships have developed with the people and families of that area through these many years. Extensive television coverage was made by the French news media.

After this event, many veterans journeyed to Normandy to pay their respects to the fallen comrades in the invasion of Northern France. A huge exhibit hall has been built in the area for public viewing. The Point du Hoc area of the battle has been left intact. The shell craters and broken concrete gun emplacements are still there for people to view. Omaha Beach and Utah Beach can be viewed from Point du Hoc. A visit to the American Cemetery in Normandy Beach is most impressive. A sign reads, "Silence is Requested." The veterans of the 100th/442nd can relate to the sacrifices made by the Rangers and the waves of fighting men who stormed the shores of Utah and Omaha and climbed the cliffs at Point du Hoc.

These brave comrades gave their lives for their country which made it possible for us to enjoy the kinds of freedom we cherish today. Jim stated: "A feeling of humbleness swept through my mind as I stood at their gravesites."

Footnote: Lost Battalion. A contingent of a battalion of the 36th Infantry Div. was trapped behind enemy line. The 100th/442nd was assigned to rescue this battalion. With the General's order of "Advance, Advance, Advance," the casualties were exceedingly high. The rescue was effected seven days after they became trapped. This became known as the "Rescue of the Lost Battalion."

*Story by Comrades Jim Tanaka and Shig Yokote*

*Sacramento Nisei VFW Post 8985, who made the pilgrimage to Bruyeres, France for the 50th Year Anniversary of the Liberation of Bruyeres.*

*Written by Sus Satow for publication in Cal. Vet. VFW Newsletter.*

WAR DEPARTMENT  
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICEREPLY REFER TO:  
Satow, Susumu 39918377  
-N MTO 291

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

21 November 1944.

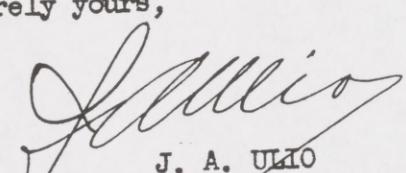
Mr. Riichi Satow,  
c/o John Jakel,  
Keenesburg, Colorado.

Dear Mr. Satow:

I am pleased to inform you that the latest report from the theater of operations states that on 31 October your son, Private First Class Susumu Satow, was convalescing.

You have my assurance that when additional information is received concerning his condition, you will be notified immediately.

Sincerely yours,



J. A. ULLO  
Major General,  
The Adjutant General.

1 Incl.

HEADQUARTERS 92d INFANTRY DIVISION

EMA/feh

AG 200.6-G

A. P. O. 92, U. S. Army,  
12 May 1945.

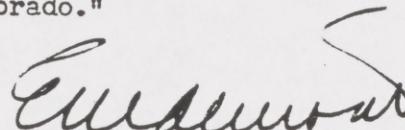
Subject: Award of Bronze Star Medal.

To : Private First Class SUSUMU SATOW, 39918377,  
Company "H", 442d Regimental Combat Team,  
A. P. O. 464, U. S. Army.

By authority contained in Circular Number 89, Headquarters Mediterranean Theater of Operations, 10 July 1944, you are awarded a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service in combat.

CITATION

"SUSUMU SATOW, 39918377, Private First Class, Infantry, United States Army. For meritorious service in combat, on 12 April 1945, In Italy. After laying a communication line between his mortar platoon and its OP, Private First Class SATOW assumed the duties of an observer when the observer was wounded. When an enemy barrage cut the OP telephone line, he repaired it under intense enemy artillery fire. His initiative in directing his platoon's mortar fire, although he had little previous experience, enabled the rifle companies of his battalion to attack under close mortar fire support. His courage and initiative are a credit to the United States Army. Entered military service from Keenesburg, Colorado."



E. M. ALMOND,  
Major General, U. S. Army,  
Commanding.



*Pfc. D. Sotter*

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY  
APO 464 US ARMY

GENERAL CEDARS  
NUMBER 89

17 July 1945

E X T R A C T

CITATION OF UNITS.

Under the provisions of Section IV, Circular Number 333, War Department, 1943, the following-named organizations are cited for outstanding performance of duty in action, and are awarded citation streamers therefor. Individuals assigned or attached to these units are entitled to wear the Distinguished Unit Badge to identify such citation:

THE 2D BATTALION, 442D REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action on 19 October 1944 near Bruyeres, France, on 28 and 29 October 1944 near Biffontaine, France, and from 6 to 10 April 1945, near Massa, Italy. The 2D BATTALION executed a brilliant tactical operation in capturing Hill 503, to expedite the forward movement beyond Bruyeres, France and to erase the German threat from the rear. While two companies pressed forward against a formidable enemy main line of resistance, other elements of the battalion struck the enemy paralyzing blows from all directions, practically eliminating an entire German company and destroying numerous enemy automatic weapons. Attacking the strategic heights of Hill 617 near Biffontaine, France, on 28 October 1944, the 2D BATTALION secured its objective in a two-day operation which eliminated a threat to the flanks of two American divisions. In the face of intense enemy barrages and numerous counterattacks, the infantrymen of this battalion fought their way through difficult jungle like terrain in freezing weather and completely crippled the enemy. Methodically, the members of the 2D BATTALION hammered the enemy, inflicting heavy casualties upon the defenders and wresting this vital feature from the surviving Germans. Maintaining its admirable record of achievement in the vicinity of Massa, Italy, the 2D BATTALION smashed through and exploited the strong Green Line on the Ligurian Coast. Surging over formidable heights through strong resistance, the 2D BATTALION in five days of continuous heavy fighting captured a series of objectives to pave the way for the entry into the important communications centers of Massa and Carrara, Italy, without opposition. In this operation the 2D BATTALION accounted for more than 200 Germans and captured or destroyed large quantities of enemy materiel. The courage, determination and esprit de corps evidenced by the officers and men of the 2D BATTALION, 442D REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM exemplify the highest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States.

BY COMMAND OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL TRUSCOTT:

OFFICIAL:

/s/ M. F. Grant  
/t/ M. F. GRANT  
Colonel, AGD  
Adjutant General

DON E. CARLETON  
Brigadier General, GSC  
Chief of Staff

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

*T. M. Kobayashi*  
T. M. KOBAYASHI  
2d Lt, Infantry  
Adjutant

R E S T R I C T E D



## 100th/442nd/MIS World War II Memorial Foundation

1438 Oak Street, Los Angeles, California 90015

### JAPANESE AMERICAN WORLD WAR II VETERANS MONUMENT

Over the years, the late Senator Spark Matsunaga (100th Batt.) has repeatedly urged the veterans of World War II to tell our story over and over again. He stated, quote; "It cannot be told often enough. The American public need to continually be educated on what happened during World War II." The 100th/442nd Veterans Association teaming with MIS SOCAL have decided to follow Sparky's advice by building a monument depicting this story. It would be our way of telling this story long after we are gone. However, time is getting short. The era of the Nisei/Kibei soldiers of World War II is almost over.

What this monument will try to convey is that, in spite of the injustices suffered by the Japanese American during World War II, the Niseis/Kibeis responded to the "Call to Arms" in overwhelming numbers.

The inscription on the monument will read:

#### AN AMERICAN STORY:

RISING TO THE DEFENSE OF THEIR COUNTRY, BY THE THOUSANDS THEY CAME --THESE YOUNG JAPANESE AMERICAN SOLDIERS FROM HAWAII, THE STATES, THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS -- TO FIGHT IN EUROPE AND THE PACIFIC DURING WORLD WAR II. LOOKED UPON WITH SUSPICION, SET APART AND DEPRIVED OF THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, THEY NEVER-THE-LESS REMAINED STEADFAST, AND SERVED WITH INDOMITABLE SPIRIT AND UNCOMMON VALOR, FOR THEIRS WAS A FIGHT TO PROVE LOYALTY. THIS LEGACY WILL SERVE AS A SOBERING REMINDER THAT NEVER AGAIN SHALL ANY GROUP BE DENIED LIBERTY AND THE RIGHT OF CITIZENSHIP.

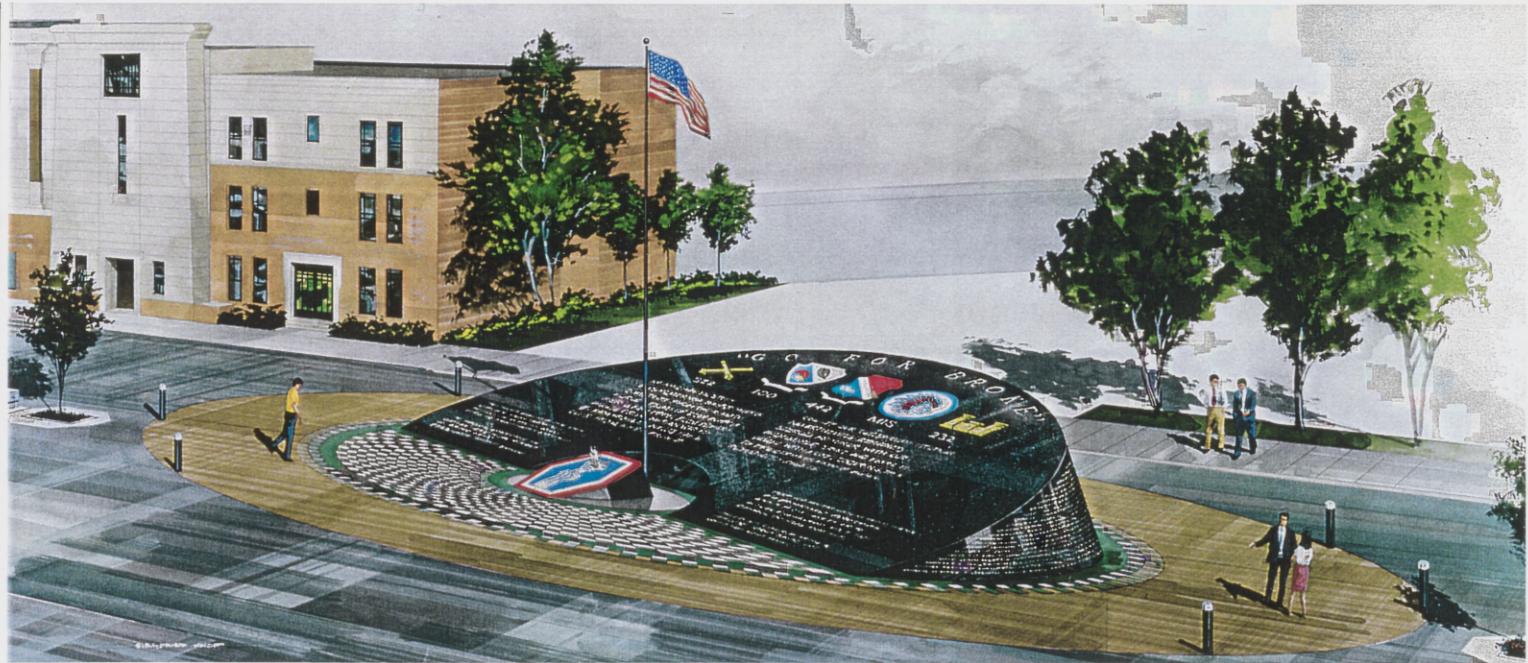
Our VFW Post 8985, throughout the years, has sent speakers out to tell this same kinds of messages. The Florin JACL has similar program with the Elk Grove Unified School District. Nowhere in the pages of American history is there such a dramatic story. However, here again, this lecture series will have to one day come to a halt. A monument etched in stone will forever tell this story.

The thousands of names on the outer wall surrounding the monument will depict these soldiers, standing shoulder to shoulder, answering the call. My name is not important, but it does represent one person who also responded. The names of those who served other than the 100th/442nd/MIS, the 232nd, 522nd will also be included. Ben Kuroki, the tailgunner on a B-24 for the Air Force comes to mind. We are working hard to compile these names. It is very difficult. If you know of anyone, please let us know. The roll will also include names other than Japanese American. They are officers who served with the 100th and the 442nd. They all had the option to leave, but chose to remain. They knew the stakes for the Japanese Americans were very high.

The purpose of this monument is to create a lasting tribute to the Japanese American who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II, and to remind all Americans that never again should fellow citizens be deprived of inherent freedom because of race or ancestry. At the foot of the monument will be the symbol of the "Liberty Torch." From it will be the eternal flame burning forever. An American flag will also stand guard over the monument.

The area where the monument is going to be located will be well traversed by visitors going to the Museum Of Contemporary Art, (MOCA), to the Japanese American National Museum, and visitors and tourist to "Japan Town." The monument will be located in an excellent location. Surprisingly little is known by the public about the J-A experiences during World War II. If nothing is done, that will fade as time marches on.

Sus Satow



WORLD WAR II VETERANS MONUMENT  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

ROGER M. YANAGITA ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS

## “Go For Broke” For America

History glorifies the legendary bravery of the ancient Greeks in the Battles of Thermopylae and Marathon. Poetry extols in stirring phrases the heroics of “Horatius at the Bridge” (Thomas Macaulay) and of the men who rode into the valley of Death in the “Charge of the Light Brigade” (Alfred Tennyson).

Unlike the storied warriors of past ages, the men of the **442nd Regimental Combat Team** were typical GI's, no better or braver than most other American soldiers.

1. *Of significant importance is the fact that the unit was composed of an ethnic minority—Japanese American Nisei, sons of immigrants from Japan.*
2. *They had been subjected to degrading mistreatment—many forced to lose home and possessions and imprisoned without trial or any evidence of wrongdoing.*
3. *The wartime enemy was of their own race—the Japanese and their Axis allies.*

The JA's had heart-rending obstacles to overcome. Yet they kept their faith and fought for America through mountainous terrains in France and Italy, with thousands of do-or-die deeds, and won acclaim as “the most decorated outfit of its size in the U.S. Army.”

**Never before in history** has an oppressed minority demonstrated such patriotic fervor on the field of battle. **Never before** has there been such a complete and rapid reversal of national attitude as the change in our status from the most hated of ethnic groups to “model minority.”

Because our soldiers exemplified the **Nisei spirit**, **ALL Japanese Americans**—women and children, as well as JA veterans, should feel that they personally share in their valor in the face of deadly enemy fire. **And all of us**, for generations to come, benefit beyond measure from their fight to redeem our honor.

Like “the shot heard round the world,” symbolized by the statue of the Revolutionary Minuteman in Concord, sparked the forming of the first modern republic, founded on equality and inalienable rights, our proof that **“Americanism is a matter of heart and mind, and not of race or ancestry”** led to profound changes in attitudes toward ethnic minorities.

The beautiful **100th/442nd/MIS Monument** will be a graphic portrayal in stone of how **“go for broke” JA's** verified with their blood that, regardless of color, our citizens can live up to the highest ideals of **Americanism**.

Although the edifice highlights the 100th/442nd RCT and the Military Intelligence Service of World War II, it is not just for the JA soldiers; for soon they all will be gone to their rewards. The monument is an affirmation of the **loyalty of all JA's**. It is the **blazing torch of faith and freedom**, bequeathed by **ALL NISEI** to all our young compatriots, to be proudly carried into the Twenty-First Century

Let us erect this **reminder** to future generations:—  
Of our willingness to fight and die  
for our land of **“freedom and justice for all,”**  
despite being deprived of fundamental rights.  
Of our patience under the most distressful circumstances  
because of our faith in our fellow Americans  
and in the **American Way of Life!**

Paradoxically, it could become a **Guiding Light to world peace**—  
a memorial to how peoples of different races and creeds  
learned to live together in peace and prosperity  
through the spirit of love and forgiveness.

Mas Odoi  
Citation Clerk, 100th Bn/442nd RCT



## 100th/442nd/MIS World War II Memorial Foundation

1233 West Gardena Blvd., #205, Gardena, California 90247

P.O. Box 2590, Gardena, CA 90247

### BANNER FOR THE THIRD MILLENIUM

Which would be a better emblem on the banner to lead Japanese Americans into the Third Millenium -- a guard tower of World War II "relocation centers," or the 100th/442nd/MIS Monument in Los Angeles?

The stark structure by a barbed wire fence recalls our darkest hour -- evacuation from Pacific Coast states and imprisonment in remote wastelands. The "Go For Broke" Monument proclaims our greatest triumph -- proof in blood of our steadfast loyalty to America that redeemed our honor and brought blessings beyond measure to ourselves and our children.

How utterly hopeless our future during the internment in "relocation centers," when we were forced to lose homes and possessions in flagrant violations of the Bill of Rights. Yet, when eligibility to serve in the armed forces was restored, JA's from Hawaii and the mainland enlisted in the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team and fought with such valor that it became "the most decorated outfit of its size in the United States Army." Others volunteered for the Military Intelligence Service and won acclaim for saving the lives of thousands of our soldiers with their courage and skill in translating the Japanese language at headquarters and on the front lines.

Their exploits on the battlefield awakened the American people to the shocking injustice of the evacuation; and they hastened to make amends. The JACL worked hard to repeal the hundreds of anti-Oriental laws and customs, and succeeded at every turn with the help of other fair-minded citizens. And the national storm of hatred, aroused by the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan, was transformed into the respect and good will we enjoy today.

Without their record, HR 442, the redress bill that awarded \$20,000 to each evacuee, would never have been enacted. And many beneficial community service projects would not have been possible.

There are countless reminders of our confinement behind barbed wires in museums, libraries, cemeteries, relocation centers, and other appropriate areas. And it is right and proper that this period of oppression be chronicled for posterity to tell of the faith and fortitude with which we met adversity.

But where are meaningful memorials to World War II JA's, whose "blood and sweat and tears" restored our good name and opened wide the gates of opportunity? Only the 100th/442nd/MIS Monument to be built in Los Angeles highlights their legendary fight for freedom and equality! All others include so many extraneous matter that the magnificent theme of loyalty that transcends gross mistreatment is diluted into nothingness.

The beautiful, wedge-shaped, black granite edifice dramatizes our World War II experience more eloquently than reams of words:

- The name, motto and inscription summarize the adverse conditions under which our World War II soldiers fought in Europe and the Pacific.
- The eternal flame by its base denotes the patriotic fervor of its members despite being treated as disloyals.
- The Stars and Stripes on the flagpole and insignia of the 442nd Regiment, 232nd Engineers, 552nd Field Artillery, and the Military Intelligence Service points to the vaunted records of these units.
- Its placement in downtown Los Angeles, from where most Japanese Americans had been evacuated, manifests the change in our standing from "persona non grata" to people of high esteem.

The monument will be a shining star to younger JA's. It will foster pride in their heritage, enhance appreciation of the unpayable debt they owe their progenitors, arouse interest in the life and struggles of the Issei and Nisei, and inspire high standards of citizenship. There will be added incentive for the majority of JA's whose fathers, grandfathers, uncles or other relatives have their names inscribed on its circumference.

It could be a focal point of lesson plans to teach school children of the Japanese American experience in the 20th Century. Because it is a great American success story with a happy ending, it would attract more interest than one that dwells on the painful period of the evacuation.

Throughout their 50-year fight to secure justice for Japanese Americans, JACL leaders have leaned heavily on the record of the World War II units. They may consider asking chapters to provide convenient means to collect contributions, large and small, for the \$2.5 million to erect a monument to the men whose self-sacrifice brought us such great rewards. It shouldn't be difficult for those who received \$20,000 redress awards to donate \$100 to \$1000 dollars as tribute to JA veterans who offered their lives to create a brighter future for all Japanese Americans.